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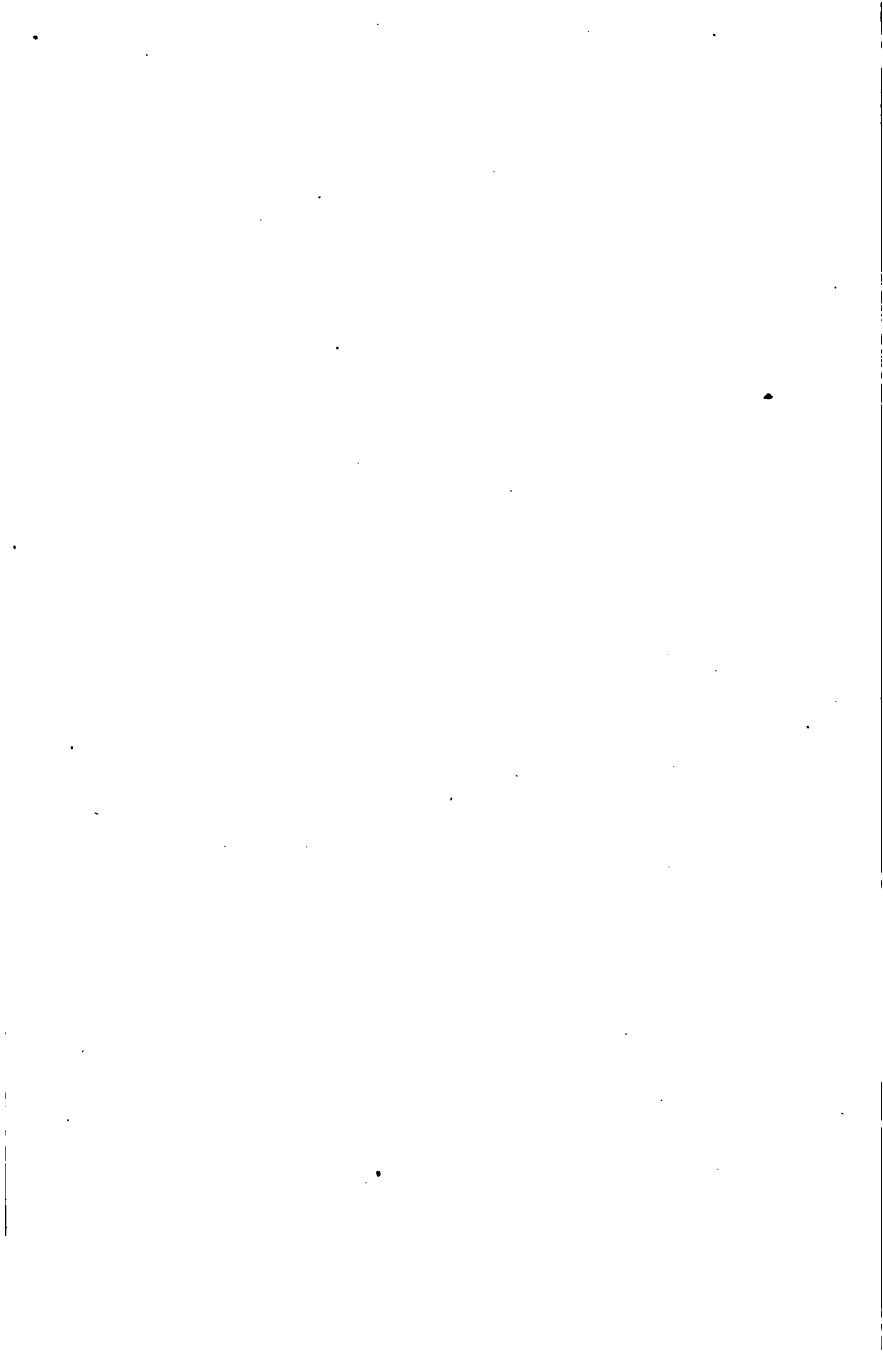
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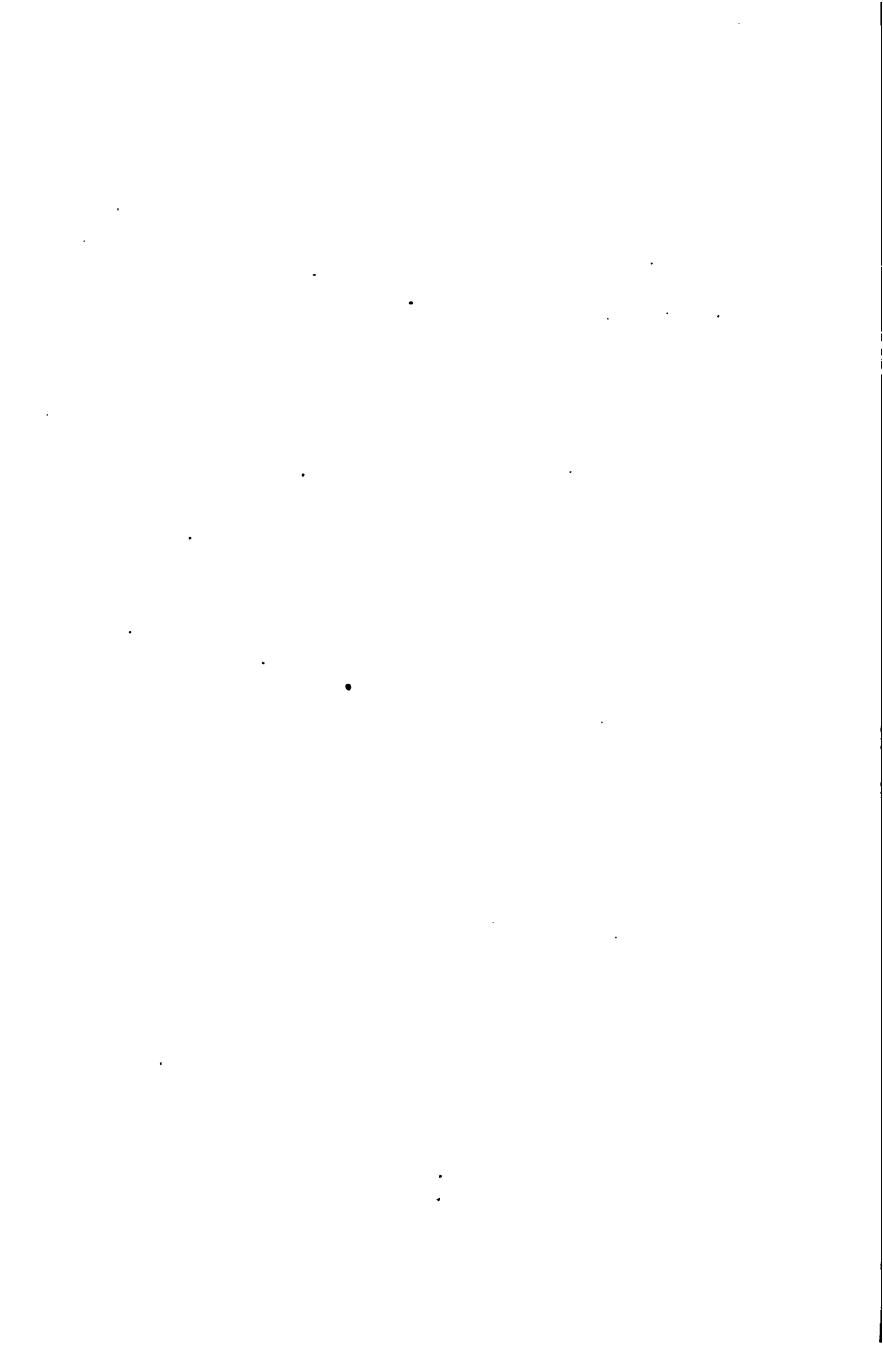






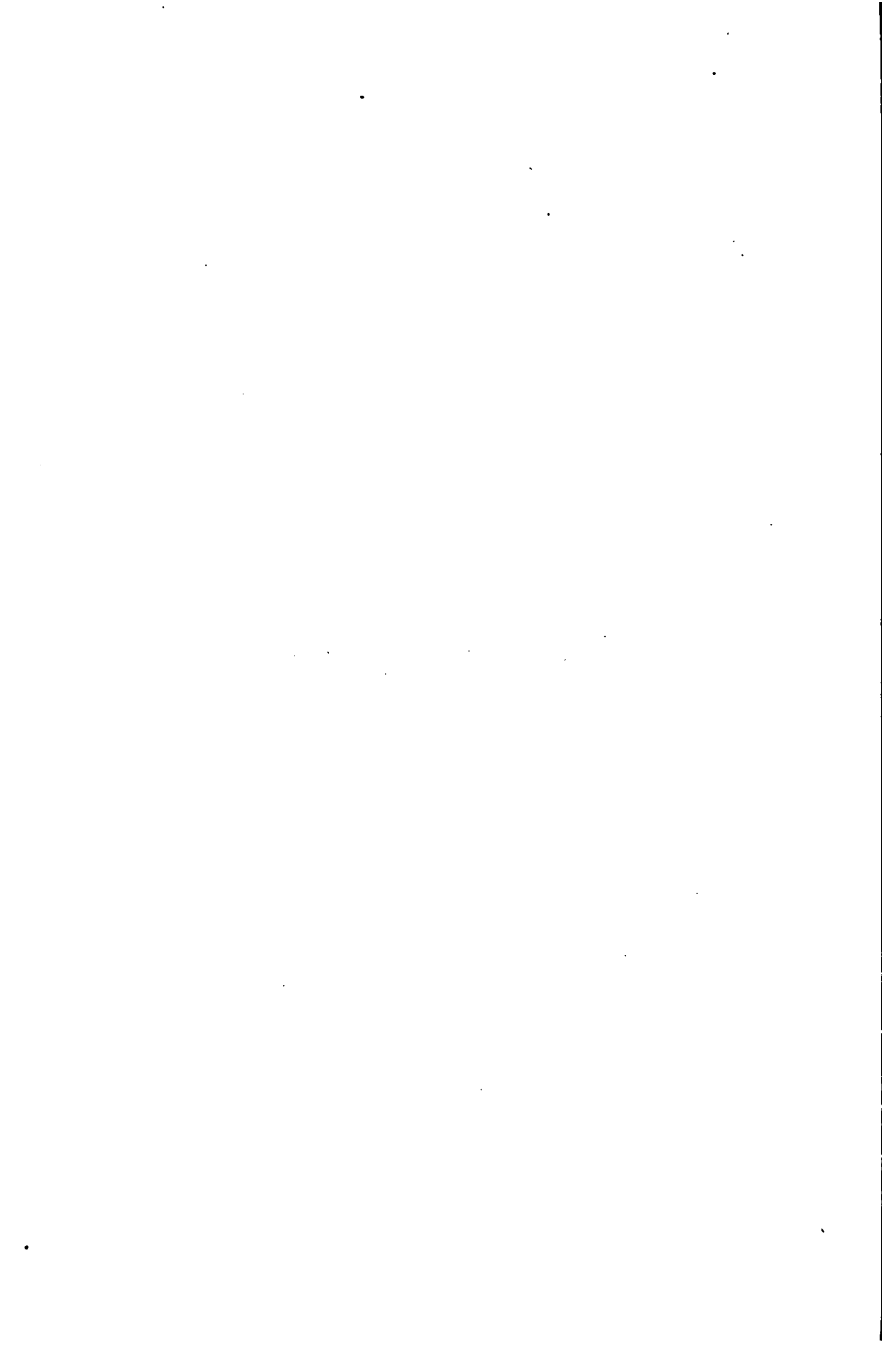






## **A Nineteenth Century Reality.**





A  
**Nineteenth Century Reality:**

A NOVEL OF THE DAY.

BY  
**MOIMÈME,**

*Author of "Sweet and Bitter Memories," "Whatever  
is, is best," etc., etc.*

DEDICATED  
TO THE  
FAIR DAUGHTERS OF TASMANIA.

*IN TWO VOLUMES.*

VOL. II.

*'Tis pleasant sure to see one's name in print,  
A book's a book, altho' there's nothing in't.*

*—Byron.*

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# A Nineteenth Century Reality.

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## CHAPTER I.

### CONVERSATION BETWEEN MUTUAL FRIENDS.



R. HUDSON being so far recovered, wished to take a drive—his first drive since his accident. Dr. Burnside and his two sisters were to accompany him. Accordingly a note was despatched to Ismène, telling her to come home. The dog Crib was also to join the party, as Mr. Hudson declared he owed many

pleasant hours to this canine friend, who often solaced him during his illness. The day for the drive was bright and calm; but no sooner had they set off than Crib gave a sharp bark, and then a deep, low, growl at the doctor; evidently he did not like him; but his master gave him a friendly kick, saying, "Lie down you rascal," and laid his shapely hand on the dog's head.

"I cannot understand how you can be so fond of dogs, Tom," said Estelle to her brother.

"Good, faithful creatures, of course I am fond of them," said Mr. Hudson.

"I believe much more in the sagacity than in the fidelity of the canine race," said Estelle.

"Why so?" asked Dr. Burnside. "Have you ever proved their sagaciousness?"

“No ; I have not had personal proof of this quality in dogs ; but we have a fact recorded in history, which tells of a dog that was certainly more sagacious than faithful. But I am not fond of dogs, however clever they may be,” said Estelle.

“Do tell us all about this historical dog ; I never heard of him before to-day,” said Dr. Burnside.

“Indeed ; then I will tell you all I know about him, in as few words as possible.” So Miss Hudson began her story :—

“King Richard the Second had a greyhound named Math, beautiful beyond description. This dog would not notice or follow anyone except the king. Whenever Richard rode abroad, the greyhound was loosed by the man who had care of it. That very instant he ran to caress his royal



master, which he did by placing his two forefeet on his shoulders.

“ It happened that, as the King and his cousin Henry of Bolingbroke were conversing in the court-yard of Flint Castle, when their horses were preparing, Math was untied, but, instead of running as usual to King Richard, he passed him and leaped to Henry’s shoulders, paying him every court, the same as he used to his own master. Henry not being acquainted with this greyhound, asked the King the meaning of his fondness. ‘Cousin,’ replied Richard, ‘it means a great deal for you, and very little for me.’

“ ‘How so?’ asked Henry. ‘Pray explain it.’

“ ‘I understand by it,’ said Richard, ‘that this, my favourite greyhound Math, fondles and pays his court to you this day

as King of England, which you will be, and I shall be deposed, for that the natural instinct of the creature perceives. Keep him, therefore, by your side ; for lo ! he leaveth me, and will ever follow you.'

" Henry treasured up what the unfortunate King said, and paid great attention to the greyhound Math, who would no more follow Richard."

" What a nasty dog," said Ismène ; " it reminds me of some persons of our acquaintance, who only care to know those people who are rich and consequently in a good position."

" Math, undoubtedly, had a sordid mind, and was base ; nevertheless, he showed his sagacity," said Estelle Hudson.

" For my part, I admire fidelity more than sagacity, both in bipeds and quadrupeds," said Mr Hudson.

They had now reached home, and, as Tom was being assisted out of the carriage, Ismène asked him "what quality he most admired in a uniped; for," said she, "I suppose that is what you are now." Her brother laughed, and said, "Girls should never be impertinent, it does not become them; but, I tell you, Ismène, I like fidelity. Give me a person who is true and faithful in adversity as well as in prosperity, one who does not shun his fellow-men merely because they are poor. I could call such a man my friend, whether he were a uniped or a biped."

Dr. Burnside determined to give a fancy ball, so asked one of his married sisters, Mrs. Firth, to act as hostess on the occasion. The doctor and Mrs. Firth received all the guests as they arrived. Amongst some of the earliest arrivals were Mr. Hudson and

his sisters. He was dressed as a Greenwich pensioner ; Miss Hudson took the character of Idalia, and wore the badge of the "silver ivy ;" her sister went as "Cigarette," and chattered in French to everybody about "her soldiers." Dr. Burnside appeared as "Berti Cecil," in the uniform of a *chasseur d'Afrique*. There was a lovely dark-eyed girl who personated "Folle Farine." She had exquisitely formed feet, which were quite bare, and wore massive golden anklets. This ball was a most brilliant affair, and was enjoyed by all those who were fortunate enough to be present.

It was a beautiful, calm, clear, warm, summer night. Berti Cecil asked Idalia to visit his conservatory, for all were dancing, and he wished to be alone with her. The moon was nearly at the full, and the firmament bedecked with bright stars. It

was a night for love, for tenderness, for soft emotions; the air was heavy with perfume of heliotrope; the night-flowering cereus, in its matchless beauty, was sending forth an intoxicating scent, lulling the senses into voluptuous ease.

Though the conversation of these two did not flag, yet their steps gradually began to linger, and Berti Cecil, with Idalia, dropped on to a seat in the conservatory, side by side.

“Beautiful in here, is it not?” said he; and he stole his arm behind her, resting it on the back of the seat, for he would not dare even to let his hand touch her shoulder. Much as he loved this girl, he was really afraid of her. She always appeared so *exaltée*, there was a sort of “touch me not” air about her; she hated, and indeed would not suffer any kind of famili-

arity. At length he put out his hand to adjust a lace scarf more closely, which was slipping off unheeded by her. This movement seemed to loosen his tongue in the way he desired it should do; for he gradually opened his heart and told her of that honest, manly devotion which he felt for her, and which is dear to most women's hearts. He became eloquent as he proceeded, but she would not speak the words he wished to hear.

Idalia told Berti Cecil "how kind he had been to her brother in his recent illness; how much she thanked him for it; that she liked him as well, and as much as any other man;" but this was not what he wanted to be told.

By this time others had come into the conservatory, so these two left it. Being host, Berti Cecil must attend to his

guests ; certainly he was not satisfied with Idalia's answers. She went up to some lady friends, and sat chatting with them ; she declined to dance again. In fact she was vexed with herself, for she feared that perhaps hopes had been raised in the breast of Berti Cecil which he could not realise. Even so, he would in time forget her ; besides, man's love is not like woman's—

Man's love is of man's life a part,  
'Tis woman's whole existence.

At last the hour for departure came ; and the carriages rolled away with the guests, who again assumed their own names, as well as their own dress and apparel ; reminding them all of Cinderella, whose wonderful history bids fair to be handed down till the end of time.

Tom Hudson was obliged to give up his mercantile career. He was fortunate

in obtaining a lucrative appointment under Government, and one which did not require him to move about much.

Sitting in her brother's morning room, Miss Hudson was joined by Captain Gordon, who asked, "Have you heard the news?"

"No; what is it?"

"Why, Rosa Kemp is going to be married to Lochinvar. Old Mr. Kemp has undertaken to pay off the debts of his future son-in-law. As soon as the honeymoon is over, the happy couple go to England; and so there will be an end to Miss Rosa's flirting."

The door was opened, and the servant announced "Dr. Burnside," who entered the room as Miss Hudson was telling Captain Gordon "how very much she would like a complete change, and that



she thought of going to New Zealand, to visit some friends who had many times invited her."

"Oh!" said the doctor, "Don't go there. It is a vile climate, either raining foggy, or drizzling, and very often the united efforts of this trio are combined. You would find it insufferable, after our splendid, clear atmosphere. I am sure you never could tolerate it. You must remember I have lived there, so know what it is."

"Certainly I don't expect any country on this side the equator to equal Tasmania in any way; for I know it is the Italy of this hemisphere," said Miss Hudson. "I am not tired of it, but I really require a change, and consider it right to go. Besides, Eleanor Blake will go with me, it is such a short voyage, and we are going under the

protection of old Mrs. Grange. If we do not take advantage of this opportunity, such a desirable one may not offer again."

"I wonder," said Captain Gordon, "if the New Zealand girls will be as jealous of our fair Tasmanians as the Melbourne people are. It was quite a joke at a public meeting over there a week or two since, when some member of the Government proposed putting a duty on preserved fruits from Tasmania, an elderly lady, and mother of a number of daughters, stood up and said—'It is of no use to tax the fruits and the preserves. Government should put a heavy duty on Tasmanian roses and lilies who come over to Melbourne in the shape and form of young ladies, and take away our rich sons!'"

"The fact is, Tasmanian women are so handsome that a man has to walk, as the

Spaniards say, with his beard over his shoulders, continually looking back at those he has passed. And they are as good as they are lovely. Indeed, to be visited or tolerated there, a woman must be—good. The women of the native race were noted for modesty and virtue, qualities which have descended as a heritage and heirloom to ALL TASMANIAN-BORN WOMEN. There is something, I don't know what, in the air and atmosphere of the place conducive alike to beauty and virtue. The old woman in Melbourne was not jealous without good cause. Certainly I have never seen so many pretty, and, indeed, handsome girls and women in my life as in Tasmania," said Dr. Burnside.

"I am quite of your opinion, and endorse all you have said. When living in Calcutta, I admired the women very

much. As a rule they are beautiful, but fade rapidly after reaching the age of maturity. I must admit, their clear olive complexion has a charm for me. The early decline of their beauty must be owing to the destructive influence of the climate. I think there is no creature more comely, more lovely, than a *mem sahib* of Bengal, between the ages of twelve and eighteen. Cleanliness is their constant care, which is a virtue to begin with. At the early age of twenty-five, deep furrows and crow's feet mark their faces, and they have a decided stoop and decrepit gait. But in Tasmania, all this is altered; women wear wonderfully well. I know many married women who look as young and as handsome as their daughters, and are as upright as Ceres. But the climate of this lovely island is, I am sure, most

conducive to beauty," said Captain Gordon.

"I don't think Miss Hudson will find New Zealand an improvement on Tasmania. What do you say?" asked Dr. Burnside of his friend.

"Certainly not; more especially that Middle Island."

"I was there once, and shall take care not to go again. Somebody has said, and with great truth—

Blest is the man who knows  
When to carry his umbrella.

From my experience of New Zealand, I should say a man, and a woman also, should carry an umbrella always. In the month of May I was staying at Kesteven, on the Flattestbury Plains. I had been there two days, both of which were fine. In the evening of the second day a cold

south-west wind came up suddenly. In an hour's time it was raining heavily, stinging, and biting—a rain which seemed ashamed of itself, because it ought to be hail. It continued to rain till the end of the seventh day ; long before that time all the streets and roads were flooded. I went in a buggy down a road, but finding the water came into it, and that the floor of the vehicle was several inches deep in water, I turned back, meaning to go by the evening train, which started as usual, but could not get far, as its progress was stopped by an accumulation of rubbish on the line ; and, much to the disgust of the passengers, we had to turn back. The railway line was flooded ; as far as the eye could reach not a rail was to be seen.

“ The water in the streets was more than knee-deep ; property of all sorts was to be

seen floating about. When the flood was at its highest, some families had to turn out of their houses, and seek a refuge elsewhere. During this rain the various roads on the plains of the Middle Island were from two to four feet deep in water. Sheep and hares were drowned by the hundred, being picked up after the flood had subsided. The damage done to grain was enormous. Two men were drowned at this time, having been washed off their horses whilst attempting to cross a creek. At Kesteven there had been no communication with the outer world for a week ! Not a letter, not a paper could be sent across the Flattestbury Plains. As soon as the railway line was repaired and fit for traffic, I left the place, and arrived at the City of the Plains, where I found it was the fashion to have iron roofs to the

houses, which resounded with a patter that, if not melodious, was at least monotonous. The monotony of the sound overhead was most irksome to me, being a stranger and unaccustomed to it; but the residents and settlers in the city were used to the continual outpouring of Jupiter Pluvius' vials, and did not heed the pattering.

“The city presented an exceedingly bedraggled appearance; deep pools of water lay here and there about the streets; the culverts all had full throats; and King Mud was in charge of the place generally.

“As soon as there was a steamer leaving for Melbourne, I went into port by train, and was on board, and out of sight of New Zealand. I can assure you I have no wish to renew my acquaintance with Maori land,” said Captain Gordon.



“ Ah! but we are going to the North Island, to the Empire City,” said Miss Hudson.

“ Indeed, then you will get earthquakes and mosquitoes, which I think are worse than the floods,” said Mr. Hudson.





## CHAPTER II.

### THE DOCTOR SPEAKS ON NON-PROFESSIONAL SUBJECTS.

**I** AM going to hear the lecture on evolution and development, to-night ; what do you say to going also ? ” asked Dr. Burnside of Miss Hudson.

“ Oh ! ” said she, “ I don’t quite believe in the theory. Darwin no doubt was very clever ; so also are Huxley and Tyndall ; but really we are expected to believe so many contradictory statements in the present day, it is quite a puzzle to know which doctrine to receive and which to

reject. Besides, what does it signify what we were so many ages ago. For a fact we know, here we are now, men and women, expected to pass through life in an exemplary and proper manner; we had better do that, and not waste time on these difficult and useless questions. Moreover, doctor, there are quite as many learned and scientific men against the Darwinian theory as there are for it. It has been wisely said, 'Man is not born to solve difficult problems, but to find out what he has to do, and to restrain himself within matters that he understands.' I don't understand the evolution and development theories, so shall say nothing on the subject."

"When doctors differ, who is to decide? for these scientific fellows are constantly contradicting each other. For my part, I

think our future of more importance. I am much more interested in the study of the destination of beings than in their origin," said Captain Gordon.

"Oh!" said Miss Hudson, "that is all arranged. The clergy always tell us that every good soul will go to heaven, be instantly provided with a harp, sit on the damp clouds and sing canticles. The bad souls we won't talk of; for, of course, *we* are all good. We need not trouble about them; their sufferings and pain won't interfere with our joy and happiness; on the contrary the 'blessed in heaven' will be glad to see the others in torture, because that will show the 'justice of God.' The elect can never be sorry for the torture of sinners. So teach the ministers of Christianity."

"But do you believe this teaching?" asked Dr. Burnside.

“No, I certainly do not, and I should not like to see Tom, or Ismène frizzling in brimstone below, whilst I had a harp up above ; but the idea of damp clouds is not my notion of heaven or of happiness. I am sure I should tire of it,” said Estelle Hudson.

“But,” said the doctor, “you know we shall all be so long lying in the damp ground that we shall get used to it ; in fact, we shall be quite impervious to moisture by the time the harps are distributed.”

“I presume we each and all have our own peculiar fancies about heaven, much as the Red Indians have, who expect their vast hunting grounds after death. It seems strange that the teachers of Christianity should have considered harp-playing as the greatest bliss, and the height of happiness ;

they never could have learned to play it themselves, or they would have known how painful and how sore it makes the tips of one's fingers. For myself, I should like good opera every night, real old lace and splendid diamonds, with such flowers as never were seen for beauty. Do you know, it has often struck me as being strange, when reading a description of the beauty of heaven in the Bible, that there is no mention made of flowers. We read of golden footstools and jewelled candlesticks, but no flowers. What a mistake this is. Why, even the Pagans gave flowers to their deities. I think some of their ideas very charming. Ceres with her wheat sheaves; Thanatos with asphodels; and Flora with all the flowers—what can be more delightful? Far nicer than a harp, I think," said Miss Hudson.

“Just like a woman’s ideas,” said Captain Gordon.

“Well, I am a woman, and, very naturally, have a woman’s taste ; and I am sure even you must allow that flowers and good opera would be more conducive to real happiness than twanging constantly on those everlasting harps,” said Miss Hudson.

“I thought you were a Catholic,” said Dr. Burnside to her.

“I am supposed to be,” said she, “and when I go to any church, I go to theirs ; but a change is coming o’er me in these matters. I believe the Catholics are as worldly and as vicious as any other set. I am in no hurry to throw off the trammels of that Church ; I shall wait, and watch how things go ; but if I ever leave it, I shall join no other. It certainly has the prestige of antiquity.”

“Yes,” said Captain Gordon, “and of iniquity, too; but I must wish you good day, as I have military duties to attend.”

“Are you shocked, so cannot stay to hear any more of our discussion?” asked Dr. Burnside.

“No,” said Gordon. “I am one of those who never interfere with, and never try to alter, any person’s faith—*ce n’est pas mon affaire*. By the way, doctor, I must congratulate you on the success of your fancy ball. I have been told that you had an ‘Ouida’ quadrille, which was not only a decided novelty, but also a marked improvement on those old ‘Waverley’ costumes we see so often. But, *adieu au revoir*.”

“How pleasant Captain Gordon is; I am surprised he has never had *une affaire de cœur*, at least not that we have heard of. It is really quite delightful to meet with a



man who does not tell you 'how lovely you look,' or 'what perfect taste you have.' I am so weary of being told these pretty, silly things. He comes in and talks in a sensible way, so that one can really enjoy his society and conversation," said Miss Hudson.

"But," said Dr. Burnside, "there is one thing about which I cannot agree with Gordon. You know he firmly believes in the efficacy of prayer. Why, it is just time lost to pray! I never have known one single instance of prayer being heard or answered; and the way in which ministers pray for wet or dry weather is quite absurd. The state of the weather depends on some natural laws, which are under the influence of sun, moon, and stars, and not at all dependent on the wishes of a congregation or on the prayers of a priest.

Some people pray to the Deity about such trivial matters. I know two men, candidates for an election, both of whom went to the daily service at church most regularly, to pray to God that *he* might be returned as the successful candidate and head of the poll. It turned out that neither of these praying candidates was elected, as two other men carried all before them."

"It is not the prayers to which I object," said Miss Hudson. "But to me it seems that a church is very much like a shop, no use to go into it unless you have money; you must take your purse with you. The ministry is a trade, and the clergy will do nothing unless they be paid."

"I see you will not long be with any particular sect; you mean to 'bide your time' I fancy," said the doctor.

"Exactly so, but in the meantime I do

wish the clergy would preach sensible sermons, draw their comparisons from nature, and even preach about her. What is so truly beautiful and so grand as she? But, no; they prefer the same old story, the same two subjects from year's end to year's end, to wit—the joys of heaven and the misery of perdition.”

“You know, doctor, my brother expects you to dine with us this evening; and our mutual friend Captain Gordon will come in by-and-by,” said Miss Hudson.

After dinner, when all were seated in the drawing-room, Captain Gordon came in. He said to Miss Hudson, “Did you finish your theological discussion this morning? You had come to the question of ‘efficacy of prayer’ when I left.”

“Oh! for heaven's sake spare us,” said Tom Hudson; “we don't want any of

that cant. There is only one prayer that I ever heard of being answered, and that was in the days of pagan Rome. A countryman once had his waggon stuck fast in the mud and mire. He knelt and prayed to Hercules, begging him to come down and pull his cart out for him. The god appeared in the sky, and called out lustily, 'Put your shoulder to the wheel;' so the countryman had to get his vehicle out himself. You see the pagan gods did not help their worshippers any more than our God helps us. The fact is, we must put our own shoulders to the wheel."

"The English mail came in to-day," said Captain Gordon; "I received my letters only three hours ago."

"Well," asked Mr. Hudson, "what is the news?"

"Oh! I'm off," replied Gordon; "my

leave of absence is granted; you know the old people at home have long wished to see me, and I shall be in time for a great family gathering. Besides, I am going to Italy with my sisters, where there is so much to be seen. As I shall be in Europe some time, we shall of course see the exhibition in Rome—that city so old. What reverence one should feel towards it, and its antiquities.”

“Yes,” said Tom Hudson; “but with all their boasted antiquities they seem to like novelties and modern amusements there, as well as in any other country. You must have heard there is to be an ‘Italian Derby,’ a great race, to be held in Rome. King Humbert has founded a cup of twenty-four thousand francs to be run for. I sincerely hope that a national Italian horse, without a drop of English

blood in its veins will come off the victor, and carry away the cup."

"An Italian Derby; what next, I wonder? I did not even know that the Italians cared either for races or for horses," said Dr. Burnside. As the evening wore away, Captain Gordon rose and said "Good-bye" to all, a long farewell, for it was not probable that he and any of those now with him would ever meet again.

Tom Hudson left the room with his friend; and Dr. Burnside, finding himself alone with Estelle, begged of her not to go away, but to make him the happiest of men, by becoming his wife.

She, in reply, said "how grieved she felt that he should think of her in such a light; and that, although she liked him as a friend, she could never marry him."

Dr. Burnside left the house before Tom

Hudson came in again. He was no longer a young man, and though he was calm and cool, he felt much pained at his refusal. He met Mr. Hudson in the garden, and told him of his rejected love, and of his disappointment. Tom laughed at him, and said, "Better luck next time, old fellow, I know you are too wise to grieve over it."

"Oh ! in these days everybody is wise ; formerly there were only seven wise men. One of them, when his mother pressed him to marry, said ' he was too young ; ' and when she pressed him again, he said ' he was too old. ' This, I am sure, is my case, and my state. I am too old to try my luck again," said the doctor.

"Mind you come and see me when she has gone to Maori land ; but I can tell you, doctor, marriage is no joke. To-day I heard that John Rugby, who

married Julia Weston, is miserable. At the time of their marriage he, like herself, belonged to the Church of England. Some little time ago, he read up Newman's works, and Manning's sermons, besides other religious works; it has ended in his joining the Church of Rome. His wife is exasperated; and yesterday, during High Mass, she went to St. Joseph's Church, walked up to where her husband was sitting, and struck him several blows on his head with her parasol. He left the church with her, looking like a fool. She is a vixen, and, moreover, is one of those women who will have her own way. In fact, she thoroughly believes in the French saying, '*Ce que la femme veut, Dieu le veut.*' I am sorry for Rugby, but he really is an ass; and as to her conduct, it is too bad. If she respected her husband



the least bit in the world, she would not make him appear so contemptible in the eyes of other people. And what, pray, is all this 'row' about? Why, about religion; just as if it could signify which church Rugby went to; or, indeed, if he went to any at all. My opinion is that before many years are over our heads, we shall find that science has taken the place of what is called revealed religion; and that the churches and chapels will be turned into lecture halls," said Mr. Hudson.

"The sooner that happens the better," said the doctor, and the two friends bade each other good-night.

In a few days Eleanor Blake came into town; she and Estelle Hudson made all ready for their proposed visit to the North Island of New Zealand.

After bidding adieu to all their friends,

they went on board a steamer, and were soon out of sight of land. Miss Blake did not see Mr. Hudson; she purposely avoided him, for the mere mention of his name sent a pang to her heart.

The voyage was short, and soon over; fortunately it was so, as it was most disagreeable and uncomfortable.

Probably no steamer has ever carried so large a number of saloon passengers from Australia and Tasmania to the various ports on the New Zealand coast as the Union Company's fine vessel *Rotomahana*. The total number of passengers on this occasion amounted to three hundred.

The scene on board at night was an extraordinary one. Every cabin, state-room, social room, saloon, and smoking-room, was literally crammed with sleepers, who lay extended on tables, seats, side-

boards, and even all over the floors. The decks were strewn with slumberers, main-deck, quarter, and hurricane decks alike ; several sought couches in the boats on the davits.

The social hall was absolutely filled with ladies and children, the latter being on board by the score !

The spectacle presented in the dead of night, when the prostrate forms of so many human beings lay scattered about, as if struck down by some mysterious power, was singular in the extreme, and made this voyage one to be remembered.





## CHAPTER III.

### THE EMPIRE CITY IN THE NORTH ISLAND, NEW ZEALAND.

**T**HE entrance to this port of the North Island is pretty enough between the fern-fringed cliffs, but one-half of it bristles with jagged rocks, both below and above the water. The sea was calm as a mill pond. Our *voyageurs* landed safely, and were met by their friends.

Mr. and Mrs. Browne, with whom Miss Hudson and Miss Blake were visiting, were elderly people. They often had dinner parties, and took much pleasure in

introducing their young friends to the best families in the neighbourhood. Estelle Hudson had formed a friendship for Mrs. Cookson, of whom she saw a good deal, and who was kind enough to show her over the Empire City. From the deck of the steamer, this city appeared to consist of a thick fringe of houses along the shore, with a background of hills. This Empire City possesses great advantages over the City of the Plains, inasmuch as a traveller can step from the steamer to his hotel without the annoyance of having to transmit both his luggage and himself a distance of eight miles by train.

When walking out with her friend, Miss Hudson noticed some queer old hulks moored to the Custom House quay, used for storing coal and kerosene. Such battered and broken old veterans are not

often seen in Colonial waters ; these looked worn out and clumsy enough to have been buffeted about by the deluge. But the greatest marine curiosity is, strange to say, *not* in the water, but high and dry on the land. It is an English ship which was left stranded by an earthquake some years ago. She lay till the shallow sea was reclaimed, and the ship, swallowed up by the advancing city, has been transformed into a wine-cellar, with the appropriate name of "Noah's Ark."

Of the architectural appearance of the Empire City, the less said the better ; it is often called "a city of wooden match-boxes." Being liable to earthquakes, the inhabitants are afraid to build of stone or brick ; so they put up with their old, and in many cases, rotten wooden houses.

The haunts for excursionists and plea-

sure-seekers are very few in number. The chief means for relaxation are yachting and fishing. Those who are fond of ferns can find a few in the neighbouring gorges. Thus, the two friends did not find much variety of amusement in this place.

One close, sultry day, when most wise people in the Empire City were expecting an earthquake, while Miss Blake and Miss Hudson were out walking, they met a gentleman coming from the direction of the harbour. To their surprise, and, indeed, horror, it was Walter Morris; not a word was spoken; not even a recognition passed between them; the ladies gave him the "cut direct." Eleanor Blake was much troubled by the sight of this man. She began to fear he had followed her to this place, and indulged in hideous visions of constant annoyance from him. She was so upset by

the unwelcome apparition that she begged to be excused by Mrs. Browne from attending her musical party that evening.

Miss Hudson informed Mr. Browne of the cause of her friend's annoyance, and learned from him that Walter Morris had large estates in some part of New Zealand, and that he lived somewhere in the colony with his son and eldest daughter. This was most unfortunate for Eleanor Blake, as she had come to this place on purpose to avoid him.

Amongst the numerous guests who attended Mrs. Browne's party were Mrs. Cookson, with her father Dr. Vincent, and Major Campbell. Mrs. Cookson arranged to give a picnic party that day week, and invited Eleanor and Estelle to join her; they were to go to Wainniomata. Whilst discussing this proposed excursion, a violent



tremor was felt throughout the house, accompanied by a low rumbling noise like subterranean thunder. It was *only* a slight shock of earthquake. The damage done was confined to smashing a few vases and the upsetting of flowers and tea-cups; so nobody troubled about it.

Before going to bed, Eleanor told Estelle she had fully made up her mind to leave New Zealand as soon as possible. She would go at once to her aunt, her mother's sister, who was living at Madras, who had written and asked her to go there when old Mrs. Blake died. She declared the sight of this man Morris, who had duped and deceived her, who was bad as bad could be, and whose falseness had prevented her accepting a good man, was so odious to her that she could not live in a

place where there was every probability she would meet him.

When he was removed from her, when he was out of her sight, her belief in honour, in truth, and in man's fidelity returned ; but at the sight of him her faith in good fled from her.

She commenced preparations for this voyage to Madras the next day. Estelle Hudson said, " Travelling is so much easier, and so much more expeditious now than when we left England, that I expect you will quite enjoy this passage. Of course you will go to Sydney first, and take another steamer there."

. . . . .

The morning for the picnic broke fine and warm. The party set out for a day's pleasure to the Valley of Wainniomata.

Translated, this Maori word signifies “ the great waters.”

Knowing how treacherous the weather is in New Zealand, everybody took the wise precaution of providing himself or herself with an umbrella. A servant with a packhorse and hampers laden with all sorts of good things, had been sent on, two hours before the party set out. After sitting down under the trees, and wandering about, then more sitting down, the sky became overcast. Soon it began to rain heavily ; this gave place to a continuous drizzle of fine, thick rain and fog—a thorough soaking kind of downfall.

Everybody hastened on, to get to the servant and the horse. Then they all determined to keep as far as possible from the trees, so as to avoid an unnecessary drenching from their foliage. Accordingly

they selected a clear open space, very near the road side. Here they all sat down, each with his or her umbrella open; they looked for all the world just like a plantation of gigantic mushrooms!

Major Campbell sat under his umbrella, close to Miss Hudson. He said, "How very provoking this rain is; I fear you will get wet."

"Good heavens! I am soaking wet already," said she; "but I do believe that kettle farthest from us is boiling; I should so much like a cup of tea."

"And you shall have one in less than a minute," cried Major Campbell, hurrying off at once—he was at an age when he liked to look and to appear, both in manners and in movements, considerably younger than he really was. He was most anxious to make a favourable impression

on this girl. Not only did the farthest kettle boil, but all of them boiled with the most considerate celerity ; so, nice hot tea was passed round in the most expeditious manner. Major Campbell acquitted himself after the most approved fashion of lovers, going backwards and forwards for everything Estelle Hudson wanted.

In all this rain, it was wonderful how the man-servant contrived to keep the fires burning. In spite of the wet and damp, this tea party passed off merrily ; everybody was laughing and enjoying it. But when all had taken enough tea, strange to say there were only just half the original number of umbrellas open. No doubt the ladies found them too heavy to hold up for so long a time, thus theirs were closed ; consequently it was absolutely necessary for each gentleman to sit nearer to a lady,

and hold his umbrella over her, as well as over himself.

Mrs. Browne would not hear of moving away yet, for she said "she was weather-wise, and she knew it would clear up soon;" so this wet picnic was kept up some little time longer.

There was some atrocious flirting carried on, it must be owned, under those umbrellas; but as almost everybody there had some private business of that kind to attend to, people had not time to notice each other much, so no remarks were made.

Many love affairs that had been in bud an unreasonable time, took advantage of the wet day and came into the full blossom of engagement.

After waiting a long time, and finding that Mrs. Browne was not a true prophetess, for the weather did not clear, the whole

party rose *en masse*, and set off homewards, "singing through the rain," till they were quite near the Empire City.

"Well, I do like what is bright and pretty," said Estelle Hudson to Major Campbell. "Just look at your city. I have never seen such a draggled, dirty-looking place as it is. Why, the houses are painted of the most sombre hues, as if the owners of them thought it a sin to display any taste in house decoration."

"Don't call it my city. You know I belong to the Middle Island, and am only a visitor to this Empire City of the North. To me it never seems worth while to spend much money on houses here, for one never knows how soon an earthquake will knock them all down. We don't have earthquakes on the Flattestbury Plains; that is my part of New Zealand," said Major Campbell.

“No doubt, you have something much worse,” said Miss Hudson. “Oh, yes! now I remember, I was told a long story about the terrible floods on the Plains.”

“How severely this girl criticises everything,” thought Major Campbell, as he looked up at the iron framework of his umbrella. They were now close to Dr. Vincent’s house, so Mrs. Cookson and Estelle Hudson bade good evening to Major Campbell. They were both anxious to change their wet clothes, and were glad to rest after the fatigues of the day. The following morning Miss Hudson returned to Mrs. Browne. She found Eleanor Blake complaining bitterly of the mosquitoes, for her bedroom window had inadvertently been left open later than usual; and the damp atmosphere of the preceding evening had driven myriads of these winged



inquisitors into her room, where they celebrated a musical festival, by blowing their tiny and melodious little horns. Their music did not delight either her ears or her mind. She found them (as do most other people), a complete and unmitigated pest, biting in a most vicious manner.

Major Campbell called on Mrs. Browne, and asked her "if her visitors were going to make a long stay."

"I think not," said she. "Miss Blake is going to Madras, *viâ* Sydney, in about a week; and Miss Hudson talks of going back to her brother."

"Indeed," said he; "then we shall lose a most charming and very handsome woman; don't you think so?"

"Yes, I do," she replied; "and more, I think Estelle Hudson is calculated to make any man happy; for her husband, whoever

he may be, would both love her and be proud of her. Do you know, Major Campbell, I have been wondering why you don't marry? You are not too young; doubtless you have taken Shakespeare's words to heart—

A young man married is a man marred; and so you have waited till you are middle-aged. Between old friends like ourselves, I may say this much without offence."

"Well," said Major Campbell, "I have not even thought of our great poet; I thought rather of what St. Paul says."

"Oh! nonsense," said Mrs. Browne; "St. Paul, you know, was a prejudiced old bachelor; neither men nor women owe him any allegiance."

Major Campbell laughed, and asked "to be allowed to come in the evening when the ladies would be with her."

“Certainly,” said good old Mrs. Browne, who was a match maker in her way, and did not care which of the girls he fell in love with ; “ but if you mean to have either of them, you must be like Masinissa, who fell in love and married all in one day.”

Major Campbell left his loquacious friend ; and, walking to his hotel, he said to himself, “ Yes, I could be proud of Miss Hudson ; she is quite different from other women ; nothing commonplace about her.”





## CHAPTER IV.

A WEDDING, A DREAM, AND A DEATH.

**L**OOK into the world," says some old writer, "and you shall see men esteemed according to their means, and happy as they are rich." Major Campbell was well off. His property was in the Middle Island of New Zealand. He was fat, fair, and past forty; had seen active service in Spain, of which country he was very fond. No person could imagine why he kept single. He was on excellent terms with himself. He wished to have a wife who would be

admired and thought much of, just as he liked his other property to be esteemed and appreciated. In fact he wanted such a woman as he thought would add to his own importance. He made up his mind to woo Estelle Hudson, who was clever, sensible, and well-bred. This was always a great consideration with the family to which he belonged. He thought she was capable of doing honour to his name and to his choice, and of reflecting credit on his proprietorship. Arriving early, he was announced, and found his host and hostess with Mrs. Ross and Dr. Vincent, who were engaged in an animated conversation regarding brunettes and blondes.

“Well,” said Dr. Vincent, “I always did admire and prefer a brunette, not merely because she pleases my eye more, but, as a rule, I think women of this complexion are

more sensible—they are more refined naturally, and don't usually get too fat."

"I think you are right," said Mrs. Ross; "for my part, I don't admire a blonde. As children and very young girls, they are sometimes pretty; but, as soon as they reach womanhood, they become coarse, red, and freckled; besides, most fair women grow lazy, hence they become fat."

Miss Hudson and Mrs. Cookson came together; many other guests arrived.

Major Campbell appeared to admire Miss Hudson greatly; he had eyes only for her, and to her he devoted himself exclusively. Her personal beauty awoke in him that appetite which is all most men know of love.

She looked her best this night, in a dress of soft, gold-coloured silk and black lace, with magnificent damask roses, and

her parure of amethysts, old family jewels, which she never would have reset, or altered in any way. She sat down to the piano, playing her own accompaniment, and sang that loveliest of songs, in French, *Robert toi que j'aime*. She had a rich, full mezzo-soprano voice, and sang well.

Major Campbell complimented her on her voice, on her good French pronunciation and accent, and on her dress, which he said was composed of the Spanish colours. During the evening he arranged with Dr. Vincent and Mrs. Cookson to go to the opera; and Miss Hudson was to accompany them the following Thursday, to hear Australia's favourite *prima donna*, Madame Fanny Simonsen.

Mrs. Cookson and Miss Hudson left the party early, as they were desirous of seeing

Miss Blake off in the morning. The steamer by which she travelled left at an unusually early hour. The friends took leave of each other on deck ; and the vessel went to sea with a disappointed girl on board.

Estelle Hudson stood and watched the steamer till it was out of sight ; she wished that she also had gone away, for she was already tired of earthquakes and wet weather, varied by mosquitoes. To her this Empire City seemed so dull and monotonous.

Thursday evening found Dr. Vincent with his party listening to “*Lucrezia Borgia*.” Major Campbell contrived to sit next to Miss Hudson, and more than once he attempted to talk to her. But she went to the opera on purpose to hear the music, so did not reply to him ; but gave him a gentle tap with her fan, which



silenced him at once, as she meant it should do.

Madame Simonsen appeared as "Lucrezia." She must have been gratified at the cordial welcome she received. The applause was most enthusiastic, and compelled her to interrupt the piece by coming forward and unmasking. The first tones of her glorious voice proved her to be the grand vocalist and musician whose skill and finish have made her reputation.

Madame Simonsen was not a woman who made her great art and her profession ridiculous by attempting to imitate birds or by any other vocal gymnastics, as some do. No—from her, you heard true and grand music vocalized. To listen to her was a rare treat indeed.

Between the acts, Major Campbell said, "Are you fond of music, Miss Hudson?"

“ Yes,” she replied ; “ particularly so of operatic music ; and Madame Fanny Simonsen is quite my favourite singer. I could not sit and talk whilst *she* sings.”

“ Oh ! you must forgive me for trying to induce you to converse. I was not aware you cared so much for music ; but how well you look to-night ; and I see you wear my favourite Spanish colours again.”

*Tout va bien*, thought he. At the conclusion of the opera, he took her hand and said “ he hoped in a few days to see her again.”

When in her own room, Miss Hudson cogitated with herself, “ What if he should propose ? Well, I am mistress of my own actions. I am twenty-five and he is forty-five. I have always heard that a woman should never be older, and indeed not near the age of the man she marries. There are

twenty years' difference in our ages, enough disparity surely. But what about love? In the true sense of the word, I have never loved. What I felt for Dr. Burnside was only regard or esteem; and for this man I don't even feel those sentiments. Most assuredly I don't love him. But they say 'love comes with time, and woman's comes last.' " With these thoughts she went to her bed and to sleep, for she was not sentimental.

In a few days, Major Campbell saw Miss Hudson again. He proposed and was accepted. No lover could be more devoted or more attentive than he was. The wedding was arranged to take place as soon as possible; that is, as soon as everything could be prepared and got ready. There was some delay; thus the hypocrisy and deceit of courtship were carried on a little while longer.

The bride's *trousseau*, also the wedding breakfast must be in readiness; and these took time. Mrs. Browne insisted upon a goodly number of guests being invited, and she would not be hurried; her plans and arrangements must be complete.

Major Campbell was on his best behaviour. He heartily wished the ceremony over, so that he could go away to his own place; for when at his sheep station, he was free from all the restraints imposed on him by decent society. He would have been glad to have fallen asleep, and to awake and find himself married; but this could not be, so he was obliged to bear with the "restraints" as well as he could.

Miss Hudson suddenly recollected the words spoken long years ago by Mr. Hunt. His words flashed across her mind. "O Miss Estelle, you will marry an old major."

Had she known where he was, she would have written to tell him he was a true prophet. As soon as Miss Hudson was engaged to Major Campbell, Dr. Vincent left for some warmer part of the country. He was out of health, and had a bad cough.

His daughter was devotedly attached to him. She would sacrifice everything for her father; in fact, she idolised him. Such love as hers is not often seen between father and daughter.

Knowing she would feel lonely in his absence, Dr. Vincent had asked Miss Hudson to stay a fortnight at his house with Mrs. Cookson. She accepted the invitation.

On the eleventh night after Dr. Vincent's departure, Miss Hudson dreamed that the sea was of a dull, leaden hue, the

sky overcast, the sea birds unable to rise, or to fly into mid-air, and that a steamer of sad, lugubrious appearance came into harbour. On its deck was a large coffin, in which a dead man lay ; and out of this, there rose up a light, the size and shape of the flame of a candle, which separated itself from the coffin. The flame tried to soar heavenwards, but was constantly beaten down. Every time it rose up a short height, it was buffeted back by some unseen power ; and a voice from the dark, murky-looking sea said, “ It is the dead man’s soul ! ”

This extraordinary dream haunted her all the morning ; she purposely avoided telling Mrs. Cookson, lest it should worry her and make her unhappy about her absent father. When Major Campbell came to pay his accustomed visit, she told him her remarkable dream.

“Oh!” said he, “I am no believer in such things; let us speak on other subjects, as we are to be married so soon. This is the last time I shall see you till we meet in church; however, all is arranged, and immediately after the ceremony we shall proceed by steamer to the Middle Island.” So they passed away their time, talking of trifles.

The wedding morning was showery, with gleams of bright sunshine between each shower. The wedding guests were bright and merry; the bride was very quiet, but looked well in her pure white dress.

The egotism of Major Campbell was apparent to everybody; he thought and spoke only of himself. The guests all thought that the bride “might have done better.” She was refined and elegant

in mind and in manner, in speech and in person. He was coarse, vulgar, and egotistical, but had the wisdom to hide and conceal some little of these undesirable traits now.

Owing to some accident, the steamer did not leave the shores of the Empire City as soon as was expected; she was delayed for some days.

Major and Mrs. Campbell went to Beachy Bay for the early part of their honeymoon.

On the second day after their marriage, a steamer came into harbour, with Dr. Vincent's dead body in a coffin on the deck, just as it had appeared in her dream.

*Chers lecteurs*, can you say why did Mrs. Campbell have this dream, rather than Mrs. Cookson, who was his own child, and who took an infinite interest in her



father? There is a mystery attached to dreams not yet penetrated.

Strange, subtle, are these mysteries,  
And linked with unknown powers,  
Marking mysterious links that bind,  
The spirit world to ours.

—L. E. L.

Mrs. Cookson was a young widow. She and her father, whom she adored, lived together. Her love for her father was as great as love could be. She had married Mr. Cookson, but it was a passionless union; and, when he died, she was not sorry, because she could again take up her abode with her father, which, of all things, was the one she most desired. Dr. Vincent was esteemed clever as a physician, and, as a scientific man, he shone; he belonged to the Huxley and Tyndall school. His daughter was, and had been, his constant companion for years. She held her father's

views, imbibed his tastes, and to her soul, his words were truth. They did not attend any place of worship ; but scientific people never do—*ça va sans dire*.

The steamer had cast anchor, and was duly signalled. Then Mrs. Cookson and an old and valued servant were rowed out to her, for as yet the health officer had not been on board, consequently no passengers had landed. Those on shore feared some infectious disease when they saw that ominous flag hoisted half-mast high, and suspected fever had been the cause of some passenger's death.

Mrs. Cookson rejoiced at the idea of seeing her father, and hoped to find him better for the change, though she had not expected him home yet. As the boat in which she was neared the steamer, the captain requested her not to come on board.

She feared the worst, and ordered the men to row back to shore. She *felt* sure who was dead on board. Not a passenger stricken by fever, no—but her own dear father was the corpse for whom the flag hang half-mast high.

During the day the coffin was taken to her house, and placed in the room which her father had always occupied.

She opened the door gently, and entered the chamber where King Death was holding his court. However republican we may be in feeling and in spirit, however much we may object to kingly power, this almighty Death is a king to whom we must bow. He not only claims us, but he will have each and all of us for his own ; for are we not *all* subject unto Death ?

Mrs. Cookson knew that it was so, for the scientific man whose body lay there

had taught her "that it is a law natural and wise that all created beings in which there is progressive life, must come forth, ripen, decay, and fall."

Such had been his teaching to her, and its truth made itself felt in her heart, where it had dealt a heavy blow.

Her grief knew no bounds ; she was inconsolable, refusing food and rest. She sat watching by her father's coffin. She threw herself on to it, calling aloud, "O God, give me back my dead, or take me also."

What mattered the few inches of lead, or the wooden shell in which he was enclosed? They were as nothing to her. In her grief, in her passionate appeals, she cried out, "Are you *really* a God of mercy, and of power?" But the only answer she heard, was the splashing of the rain on the window.

“No,” she cried. “God is merciless ; my father was all I had, and even he is taken from me. God is powerless, for He cannot give me back my dead.”

A number of clergymen called to see her ; partly with the view of converting and consoling her, partly out of respect to the memory of the dead man ; for he was kind and gentle to all, and so became a favourite. One of the reverend men said, “It is impiety to speak as you do ;” but she answered, “Either I am just what God intended I should be, or else God cannot carry out his intentions. He is powerless it seems. In which case, I for one cannot worship Him the least in the world.”

“But I come to you with a Gospel of glad tidings ; if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow. Only be-

lieve, and you will be saved," said another.

"Yes, I know you all make a great hurrahing about your doctrine being a Gospel of glad tidings; inasmuch as a belief in it is the only way to escape eternal damnation. To me, this seems a piece of wonderful impudence, considering it was the priesthood, and they alone, who set up this abominable doctrine. Before the time of a priesthood, no human heart was wicked and desperate enough to dream of such an atrocity. What a Gospel of glad tidings is yours, eternal perdition for all those who cannot perform the arduous task of believing — the impossible!" answered Mrs. Cookson.

The monotonous croak of these parsons, who went on praying for her, and talking to her, was more than she could bear; and

she said in bitterness to them all, "Leave me at peace with my dead, for to-morrow I shall not have even his dead body."

But these men still talked to her, though with profitless outcome. They continued to talk to her of her soul, and painted the terrors of eternal judgment after the most approved ecclesiastical fashion. She paid little heed to their exhortations, though several good and kind men of different denominations offered her the free loan of their own private latch-keys to the gates of heaven, in the form and shape of prayers, sacraments, litanies, and hymns.

To all she answered, "My father's belief is mine; from him I learned my doctrines and my creed, which I will never give up." She sat resting her head and her arms on the coffin, and spoke not

another word. The ministers of religion departed, so she was alone with her dead.

Dr. Vincent's malady was heart disease; it was unlooked for, undreamt of; his death came swift as an arrow from Hecate's bow; he dropped dead in his dressing-room, at the hotel where he was staying.

The mighty sovereign King Death had claimed him; there were no loathsome or revolting details.

Mrs. Cookson informed the friends of her late father that she should follow his remains to the grave. They highly disapproved of her doing this; but she assured them she would be calm.

The grave yawned for its victim; and Dr. Vincent left his home for the last time, borne away by alien hands, amidst much tramping of strange feet.

Mrs. Cookson went to the funeral as



chief mourner. All was quiet and proceeding in the usual manner when, as the first spadeful of earth was thrown upon the coffin, she jumped into the grave, and called aloud to the men to cover her, and to bury her with her father. Two of her oldest friends, after much trouble, got her up, put her into a carriage and sent her home.

The next week she left the Empire City, and went to live far away in the north, where she busied herself in many good and useful works amongst the Maoris and their children. For without work her life would have been unbearable and insupportable. The day after this interment, Major and Mrs. Campbell went south ; they left for the Middle Island.





## CHAPTER V.

### LIVING IN THE MIDDLE ISLAND.

**ON** arriving at the port, Mrs. Campbell was disappointed. She found it so ugly, an uneven, irregular town, with high, bald, scrubby hills; and she had to live somewhere on this uninviting land; had to make her home on those unloveable, unresponsive bleak hills. The woman who would dare attempt such a thing must indeed be of rare courage and of undaunted energy, with high spirits to help her through with her task.

Sitting alone, Mrs. Campbell meditated on the ugliness of the country in which she found herself. Not a tree to be seen ; no green grass, only those everlasting "tussocks" like vegetable wire, which cut your fingers if drawn through them. Animals imported from any other country where they are fed upon grass, must surely think they are eating string or wire here, so miserable is the pasturage.

Her home was dull and monotonous in the extreme ; not a flower, not a bush, not a tree to be seen. The only sounds that ever greeted her ears were the bleatings of hundreds and thousands of sheep and lambs, and the distressingly dreary, unvaried drag, drag, drag of the wretched sea on a beach many, many miles away. So different to the sea, full of golden ripples or with blue waves dancing high,

at which she had looked with delight and pleasure in Tasmania. All night and all day the sheep continued their bleating. She wished, from the depths of her heart, that Noah had forgotten to take a pair of sheep into his ark. Had he only left them out in the flood she, for one, would have thanked him ; for then the breed of bleating creatures might have been extinct—to her ears this sound was such an intolerable nuisance. Nothing was to be seen but barren, tussocky hills all round the house. It was of no use to go out and walk over them, because you only found the same barren, tussocky hills beyond ; besides, they were full of great holes, and numberless huge boulders were lying about, making it very unsafe for pedestrians ; and, as Mrs. Campbell did not ride, she was forced to pass most of her time in her house, the

only changing feature in the scene before her being a flock of sheep driven by a shepherd, accompanied by his dogs. These she knew in the distance, for the whity-brown creeping mass represented the animals that bleat; whilst a small black spot moving here and there, represented the animals that barked.

There was a garden to her house, just as there was one to every house on and near the Plains; but flowers would not thrive in the climate or in the soil, and no wonder, for the sun there is cold, and the wind is colder. A friend had shown her a plantation of blue gums, poor, miserable, stunted little dwarfs, without any gum on them, and she looked in vain for the large bunches of constellated blossoms, with their white fringed cups. As to the wattle, which had been transplanted to this

ungenial clime, poor darling, it tried to open a few sprays of blossom, but it was a miserable failure; the golden fragrance of it could not be diffused on the cold, chilly atmosphere of this place. She felt sorry for these trees, for like herself they were "transplanted;" they were *in* the Middle Island, *on* its plains; but, they were not *of* it. The sighing and the rustling of their leaves seemed to say to her, "Take us back to our own beloved Tasmania, for here we pine and sicken."

She remembered having seen a great oak tree at Glen Dhu, in Tasmania, a strange and a foreign tree; but the kind, warm sun and the genial climate brought this strange tree to great perfection, for it gives shelter and shade to more than a hundred people at once. Mrs. Campbell was nearly always alone, her husband

being constantly occupied with the supervision of his large estates, and the breeding and rearing of animals for his various "runs," or sheep stations, as they are called. He took great interest in all such things, because those pursuits suited his taste. To him they gave pleasure and enjoyment, being thoroughly selfish. He did not care who was shut up in the house, so long as he was out when he wished to be. He did not care who was lonely, so long as he never felt dull. He enjoyed life most thoroughly in his own peculiar and particular manner.

He was coarse, both in mind and in manner; was boorish and ill-tempered, would curse and swear at every trifle. In fact, he was one of those men who always hang up their good manners and their civility with their hats in the hall, and

take them down for use, only when they are going out to mix with the world.

Before marriage he had succeeded in hiding these faults, which now assumed the magnitude of glaring defects in the eyes of his wife. He did not think it worth his while to try and win the good opinion or the esteem of his wife ; though, before she held such near relationship to him he took much trouble to woo her ; he paid attention to her and tried to please her.

Once married, the knot tied, and then all this politeness and gentlemanly courtesy vanished like a dissolving view. “ We are married now,” said he to himself, “ and there must be an end to that sort of thing ; it is too much trouble for me to keep it up.”

About this time Mrs. Campbell heard



from her brother. In her letter from him was also one enclosed for Eleanor Blake, which she re-addressed, and had it posted for Madras.

. . . . .

Sitting as usual, alone, her reverie was dispelled and interrupted by the servant announcing "Mr. Braye." He was an old friend of Major Campbell's, and asked her, "how she liked the Middle Island."

"Not at all, and this particular spot is ugly, bare, and bleak; but we are going to leave it, we are going to live on the Plains at the end of the present year. I very much dislike living on a sheep run. There is nothing to be seen except tussocks, and those idiotic sheep, which are so stupid as to endanger their own necks by getting entangled in a wire fence, when a shepherd has set a gate wide open for them; but

through which they will not pass. But, Mr. Braye, how is it that you did not settle here ? ”

“ Ah ! my dear lady, at my age I want a good fire to warm my old bones ; and seeing how destitute this part of the island is of timber, and indeed of all fuel, I made up my mind to go to Australia, rather than remain here.”

“ Quite right, you showed your sense. Can you tell me if there ever were any trees here ? and if so, what in heaven’s name has become of them ? ”

“ I know nothing about it, but when I saw there was no timber for fuel, I asked an old resident about the ‘ native coal ; ’ and he told me it was better calculated to put a fire out, rather than to make one burn,” said Mr. Braye.

“ It certainly is a horrible place, and

everything in it is most perverse," said Mrs. Campbell.

"I often wonder how you have existed here so long," remarked Mr. Braye.

"You see, my home is here, and I must try and make the best of it. I live on year after year minding my babies and trying to conquer the bad soil and ungenial climate; for I am determined, if possible, to make some flowers grow in those borders of mine, should they be nothing better than buttercups and daisies. I will make flowers grow here; I have tried many times, and, as you see, have failed; but I don't acknowledge myself beaten yet," replied she.

"I must admit you are a marvel, a wonder to me. How a woman can stay in the same house, in the same place, and work the year out and in, dwell on, and

deal with the same people, and hear the same ideas constantly, without pining and longing to get away, or without crying out, 'I am sick and tired of it'—that woman has either a very great mind, or else she has no mind at all. Now, Mrs. Campbell, which state is yours?" asked Mr. Braye.

"Most decidedly I have a longing, a great yearning to get away from here, but I know I cannot do so till the end of the year. I make and create an interest in my unpromising flower borders; I watch the horrid fog creep slowly up the hill, until I feel choked with it, and am obliged to run indoors. Sometimes I try to be interested in a wretched lamb that is forsaken by its mother; and, do you know, I have learned something since I lived on this 'sheep run'—the old ewes are such fools they don't know their own lambs! You see any

little discovery of this sort makes a variety, a change in the daily routine of my life ; besides, I have my books," said Mrs. Campbell.

"Yes, I see, you have two babies, your books, fogs, wretched lambs with fools of mothers — a most attractive programme indeed ! and you endure the rehearsal of this from year's end to year's end. Out of it you create and make a supply of fresh daily food for your mind ; so I must say, you are one of those women who possess a very great mind," replied Mr. Braye.

"Thank you for a very pretty compliment," said Mrs. Campbell, as she made him a low curtsy.

"I must say the weather in New Zealand amuses me ; such a mixture of winter and summer in a haphazard sort of way, an hour of warmth and an hour of cold, varied

by wind and wet in the course of every day, is something too dreadful to bear," remarked Mr. Braye.

"I am afraid your impressions of the place are not more favourable than are my own," said Mrs. Campbell.

"My impression of New Zealand is that it is a very splendid country, possessing many advantages, and that for delicate people it is especially calculated to end their troubles. But it is a very fine country for *the survivors!*" said Mr. Braye, as he rose to take leave of Mrs. Campbell.

"When do you return to sunny Australia?" she asked.

"Next month, positively, but I shall come and see you once more before I go," Mr. Braye said, and he shook hands with her.

Major Campbell rode up to his house

just twenty minutes before his dinner hour.

As soon as the soup was removed, he asked his wife "if anybody had been there during the day."

"Yes ; your old friend Mr. Braye was here," she replied.

"Then, why did you not mention it before ? I always have to pump you for every piece of information that any other woman would tell her husband."

"I did not think you cared whether he came or not ; besides, he said he would come again before he left the place," answered his wife.

"Who the devil authorised you to think ? I should like to know," growled her husband.

"If you really desire to see him, you had better stay at home part of every day

till he calls again, then you will be sure not to miss him," said Mrs. Campbell.

"Oh, no, thank you, I prefer riding about; besides, I don't wish to see Braye in your presence. I know the stuff you women talk; I shall appoint a day to see him in the city at my club," snarled Major Campbell.

A long silence followed, which the master of the house employed in eating heartily; after which he cursed and abused women in general, and his own wife in particular.

Mrs. Campbell knew better than to reply to an angry, hot-tempered man. She had been married two years and a half, and in that time had learned when to speak, and when to be silent; but her prudence availed her nothing on this occasion. In coarse, harsh tones, he accused her of sel-



fishness and of meanness, and this in presence of the servants.

It was long before Mrs. Campbell forgave her husband this unjustifiable attack upon herself. Civilities passed between them, but there never was even an attempt at affection. Each knew that there rankled in their hearts a *something* that was incurable.

Most fortunately she had an annuity of her own, quite independent of Major Campbell, for he was not a generous husband. On the contrary, he grumbled and scolded at every trifling household expense.

Her life was devoted to her two children, for she thought in after years she surely would receive from them some small share of love and gratitude. These children were her constant companions; she lived only for them. Her tastes were dissimilar

to those of her husband ; she had no pleasure in his society, or in his conversation.

He cared for nothing but his animals and his landed property. As to flowers, of which she was so fond, he did not know one from the other. "The nursery," he said, "was the fit and proper place for children," and he "would not have them running about the house."

She occasionally heard of his excesses and of his amours, but she did not upbraid him. Her love of refinement was a constant restraint upon him, just as her mode of feeling and of thought was a perpetual annoyance to him. This state of things continued, but she never sought to avenge herself. As a wife she was faithful and chaste, not because she loved her husband, but because she valued her honour, and respected her own and her children's good

name. It was her innate nature to be loyal. On the occasion of every trifling ailment, she tended and nursed this man with assiduity and care. To her children she was a complete slave.

She often wondered why people said "marriages were made in heaven," for surely, she thought, "they get terribly shaken coming down."

She had often heard that love matches turned out ill and *vice versâ*. It seemed to her that no one can tell what love is, and it is quite impossible for anyone to guess what marriage will bring.

Love born of the eye rarely ever remains, it is the love of "sympathy" which is the more lasting of the two. Love born of lust and sensuality cannot last.

How is any woman to know why a man loves her? It is impossible.

Men, in the character of lovers, are invariably liars, both in their words and by their actions. For men say things to the woman of their choice which they know to be utterly false, and every action of theirs has a tendency to deceive her. In fact, both marriage and love are impenetrable.

Few of us are prepared for their disclosures. We may love and marry a second time, but our ideas of both love and marriage are totally opposite to the thing itself!

The honeymoon is proverbial as a happy state of existence. It is so happy that the blissful pair usually go away and bury their enjoyments from the sight of familiar eyes. Yet ostentatiously radiant as are the symptoms of happiness betrayed, doubtless hypocrisy is seldom practised by married

people to a greater extent than during the first four weeks of marriage.

The getting to know one another, which has *never* been done during the months or perhaps the years of courtship, is in reality a terrible business. Yet all this time, when friends drop in upon them—as friends are sure to do, however distant the marriage tour—the newly-married pair are forced to exhibit that quiet serenity of joy which is considered the only proper appendage of the first days of matrimony.

This hypocrisy is inevitable ; so do not let us blame it too severely. It must be sustained out of a decent respect to the opinion of the world.

Whatever people may think about love and marriage, matters very little ; for it is an indisputable fact that men and women who marry without love are like those who

sail on a long voyage without any anchor on board. The marriage voyage may be prosperous, and the anchor never required ; but should the winds prove contrary, and there is no anchor to be found, nothing to hold to in their extremity,—what then ?

Mrs. Campbell was by this time living on the Plains, which were quite as distasteful to her as the barren hills she had left. She had her children, her music, her flowers, and her books. She was determined to act as the Spaniard did who always put on spectacles when about to eat cherries, in order that the fruit might look larger and more tempting. In like manner she made most of these few enjoyments, and packed her matrimonial disappointments and her connubial griefs in as small a compass as she could.

So her life passed on, the estrangement

between herself and her husband slowly, but surely and steadily, widening each year.

Major Campbell belonged to a "good family," as he expressed it. He came from a "good stock," and he prided himself upon "his blood." He considered this to be a sufficient passport to take him from one end of the world to the other. He attached much importance to birth—little or none to manners or general demeanour. He thought he had a right to be a boor in his own house, provided he showed a certain amount of courtesy to "the world." To his equals he was civil; to those under him, or in his control, he was a bully.

When Estelle Hudson married him, she thought he was "rough and blunt," but made of good material, and that she would brighten and polish him up. However, that was a feat she could not accomplish,

for he was like unto those to whom the great Napoleon compared the Russians, "Tartars with a little French polish." She found the material under the thin coat of polish was not good, but was cross-grained and harsh ; so much so that she could make no impression upon it.

About this time Major Campbell became a candidate for a seat in the Colonial Parliament. He went through the usual routine of meeting constituents, making speeches, and other electioneering business. He was duly elected and returned member for Bauhpaki. Now he devoted his time to politics, had the letters M.H.R. after his name, and fully believed in his own importance.

The sheep-run was left to the management of an overseer, who had a large staff of assistants under him.



Mrs. Campbell lived a very quiet life. She rarely visited anybody, as she did not care for or like the society of the Plains, so she kept aloof from it. A lady and gentleman called to see her one day, soon after a public ball had been given, when the conversation turned upon it and those present on the occasion.

"I am surprised you do not patronise our balls," said these visitors, as they looked at Mrs. Campbell, and thought how becomingly she dressed, and how handsome she was.

"Are all the women who go to your balls as ugly as those who are to be seen walking in the streets? I was in the City of the Plains last week, and certainly I never in my life have seen such a collection of ugly and vulgar women as I saw there," said Mrs. Campbell.

“ Yes ; we have the same ‘ Plain Women,’ and you know it is quite a joke ; the name they have earned is the ‘ Plain Women of the Plains.’ When in England, and at Bristol, I was told that if a man from any other town would marry a Bristol woman, he was presented with the freedom of that city, the women there being so ugly it was necessary to offer some inducement in order to get them married. I think before long the New Zealand Government will have to offer some bribe to get men to marry the ‘ Women of the Plains,’ ” said one of the guests.

“ Yes, I agree with you ; in England, an ill-favoured woman is considered a ‘ social failure.’ I don’t care a straw for what George Eliot says ; besides, her reasoning in *Adam Bede* is vitiated by her

compassion for an unmerited and irreparable misfortune, as she calls ugliness ! But beauty is, I believe, a heritage of English women. Fortunately English society does not conspire to perpetuate a race of ugly women, simply because 'society' knows it never can divest Englishmen of a great prejudice they have in favour of marrying pretty ones," said Mrs. Campbell.

"Don't you think it would be a good plan to drown all the female children born on these Plains, so soon as it was found there really was no possibility of them growing into comely women ? I am sure much after-misery would be spared to them. Now that Major Campbell is in Parliament, you might suggest to him the necessity of stopping the increasing ugliness of the feminine portion of our community, by bringing forward a motion to

‘permit the drowning of ugly girls,’” said one of her visitors.

“I am not sufficiently interested in the Plains or its women to trouble about them.” She was, however, quite conscious of her own attractiveness; she knew there was beauty in her gleaming hazel eyes, her thick dark hair, fair skin, and delicate, well-shaped hands. Her figure, she knew, was perfect also. She turned to one of her visitors, saying, “I don’t approve of professional beauties; I think they ought not to be encouraged.”

“Certainly not; the idea is odious to a refined mind. You have, I think, been in Tasmania—that favoured spot can boast of many very lovely women,” said her friend.

“Yes,” replied Mrs. Campbell, “I lived there a few years with my brother; certainly the girls and women there are beautiful.

They have really perfect features, and a fine physical organization, such as carries with it spiritual and moral graces ; their complexions are exquisite, their figures superb. I think the country and its climate deserve credit for the comeliness of its daughters."

"Of course people's surroundings must influence them very much ; in Tasmania, mothers have everything that is beautiful in nature around them ; hence they are happy and smiling ; but here, good heavens, mothers see everything that is ugly, and in the city they have only foul smells to sniff and a dirty fog over their heads. Hence they are sour-looking ; have *retroussé* noses, because they always have a bad smell under them ; and discontent is stamped on their features," said her friend.

"Well, we all agree upon this point,"

said Mrs. Campbell, "that the Flattest-bury Plains produce a plain race of people."

"At the ball last week, there was only one woman present who had any pretensions to good looks; she is an English woman, though she has made her home, and lives on our Plains," said the lady friend, as her companion rose to take his leave, for he had business to look after; thus he was compelled to go away.

"May I ask who this person is? does she dress well?" said Mrs. Campbell, who on that particular day wore a morning-dress of some rich, soft material, of a tawny amber hue, with its flowing folds, which suited her admirably, and was fastened at her throat by a jewelled brooch which sent out a myriad sparkles each time she moved. She really did look most graceful and fas-

cinating as she sat listening to her gossiping friend.

“ No, for she over-dresses herself; she puts on too much, and too many colours. She is the wife of Mr. Maydwell, a man of good family, who has run through a great deal of money, losing large sums by gambling and in the thousand and one other ways by which men can so easily lose money. For a long time the father paid all his son's debts; at length he became tired of doing this, and positively refused to advance another shilling; thus Mr. Maydwell was compelled to go to the Jews for money. He got completely into their power. When the time for payment came, he could not meet the demands made upon him; he was threatened with exposure, and with—jail. His father was inexorable, was hard as adamant. At

this critical juncture an officer in the —— Regiment, a friend of his, was about to marry; this man had for some time a mistress, whom he found would not be shaken off.

“A charming idea suggested itself to this officer. He would pay off Maydwell’s debts, on condition that he should make the ex-mistress his wife—actually marry her. This was a stroke of masterly policy on his part.

“He mentioned his plan to Maydwell, who was most indignant, and talked about his connections in high-flown style. All this time the money lenders were pressing him.

“In a day or two Maydwell offered to take the woman off his friend’s hands, but *not* as his wife. This arrangement would not suit, the officer being determined to



get the woman quite out of his way. He knew if Maydwell married her, he must leave England, as his people would never countenance the wife. So he played his cards accordingly, and—won the game.

“ Maydwell married the woman, the officer paid the debts. Maydwell’s father and mother raved and stormed, would not receive their daughter-in-law, but sent the couple out here. She has her ‘lovers’; indeed, her conduct is notorious, and causes much worry and annoyance to her husband, who is most gentle and courteous. He has very bad health, but that does not trouble her.

“ Mr. Maydwell’s father has quite disinherited him, on account of this *mésalliance*. He is prematurely old, for his troubles so harass and torment him, he is worn out by them, as a stone is by the

constant dropping of water upon it," said this garrulous friend.

"Oh ! so those are the kind of women you have at your balls ? I may congratulate myself that I did not go ; certainly I am not accustomed to the society of women of *that* stamp," said Mrs. Campbell.

"Oh ! but she is married," said the visitor.

"That does not alter the fact of her being bad ; a bad single woman is no worse than a bad married one ; as far as I can see, they are pretty much alike. If this Mrs. Maydwell were married twenty times over, it would not, could not, make her a virtuous or a chaste woman. She has been bad ; the thing has been done which never can be undone ; God Himself is powerless to make this woman other than she is," said Mrs. Campbell.

“ Well, I really must be going,” said this prattler, as she looked at her watch, and exclaimed, “ I had no idea I had been so long !” As she went out at the gate she met her companion, who had left the house half-an-hour ago. They met Major Campbell, who was hurrying up the road ; but he stopped to speak to these people in his most bland and polite way ; he also told them something amusing, which made them laugh.

These two persons walked away saying, one to the other, “ What a charming man that is, he has such a flow of spirits, is so full of fun and jokes.”

No sooner was Major Campbell in his house than he began rushing about as though he did not know which room to enter first. He asked one of the servants “ where her mistress was.”

Being told, he went to the drawing-room and began to abuse his wife. "What a confounded viper you are," said he, "you know I want my lunch as soon as possible. I am off to the seat of Government. Parliament meets in three days; the steamer starts this afternoon. It will take me every minute of the time to get into port, and there you sit talking and listening to the twaddle of those people."

When he stopped to take breath, Mrs. Campbell said, "Your lunch is waiting for you in the dining-room, your portmanteau has been sent into port to the *Royal*."

"Why the devil did you not say so?" he roared at her.

"It is not usual for people to seek lunch or a portmanteau in a drawing-

room. Had you looked in the proper place, you would have found what you want," said his wife, as she left the room.

The next morning all the local papers informed the public that the numerous 'M. H. R.'s' had gone to their parliamentary duties.

Major Campbell made no speech in the House; indeed, he sat for the most part of his time on the back benches. He ate the parliamentary suppers and dinners, and amused himself with those women of the *demi-monde* who happened to please his taste. This man was selfish, sensuous, and coarse; a profound egotist, he was unable to conceive of any nature otherwise constituted than his own; hence, he did not appreciate the refinement or the mental culture of his wife, nor yet her power of

merging her feelings and subordinating her life to his. He never found time to pay her common attention.







## CHAPTER VI.

AS THE OLD TREE BUDS IN SPRING, SO DOES  
THE OLD LOVE REVIVE.

**A**FTER being on the high seas for many weeks, Miss Blake reached Madras in safety. Her aunt gave her a cordial and kindly welcome. Having stayed some months there, she found the climate too hot, and altogether too enervating for her. Thus she determined to go on "the high seas" once again, and start for old England.

She had made every preparation ; and, going into her aunt's room, she asked that



old lady when the next steamer for home would start?"

"Eh—what did you say? My dear, did you speak?" asked her aunt, who was reading the *Madras Press*.

"Yes, aunty, I want to know the name of the next steamer that starts for home, and also on what day she will leave?" said Miss Blake.

"The *Lahore* goes next Thursday; she is a very fine vessel, and a number of my lady friends go by her," said the aunt.

"Then, dear aunty, I will write at once to the agents and secure my passage," replied the niece.

The good aunt went to see her niece off, placed her under the care and particular protection of the captain.

Coming for the first time among her fellow-passengers, what was her delight and

gladness to see a face she knew well ! for there was Mr. Hunt, her old fellow-passenger of the *Ulswater*, the vessel in which they both sailed from England.

He immediately recognised her, came forward, and shook hands.

She noticed he had a very broad band of black crape round his arm and on his hat, for his good and much-loved wife had died two months since.

The bell rang, so all visitors departed at once, and the steamer *Lahore* went to sea !

Miss Blake had not forgotten her Tasmanian lover ; she still continued to pray for his welfare. The letter he had written to her was not destined to reach her hands till both it and she arrived in England, and were safe and sound in Leicestershire with her brother, the fox-

hunting squire. For this letter from her lover was not delivered in Madras till ten days after the *Lahore* left.

The good old aunt re-addressed it, and sent it on its journey once again.

When they had been at sea only a few days, Miss Blake noticed the dreamy, wistful, meditative expression of Mr. Hunt's eyes. She saw plainly he was getting mad again, upon the same subject as before. Ere long, he would put out his hand to keep the children off him, lest they should hurt the duck which he firmly believed he carried about with him.

The weather became very warm, and Mr. Hunt's insanity increased; so much so that he was obliged to be kept in his own cabin. Miss Blake had not seen him for some little time, when one day, directly after breakfast, the doctor announced that

“ Mr. Hunt was dead, apoplexy being the immediate cause.”

The burial took place the same day. A service of this kind is more impressive at sea than on land. Though the dead be unknown to us even by sight, it is impossible to feel anything but horror at the thought of leaving behind in the mighty waters a member of the ship's company. Though, in truth, it was a mercy this poor lunatic and imbecile was dead, yet the ceremony of committing his body to the deep cast a gloom over the whole ship.

Miss Blake had known Mr. Hunt longer and better than any of the other passengers had, so, out of respect to his memory, she joined the procession as it moved slowly along towards a gangway, where she heard the voice of the clergyman for a few seconds.

The engines ceased to throb, but there was a noise of ropes, and something heavy was lifted, which swayed about ; it was the coffin, covered by the Union Jack. The speed of the *Lahore* was slackened, there was a sudden push, a splash, the water gurgled as if the deep yawned and was ready for its victim and its prey—and all was over.

After this melancholy event Miss Blake felt sad and depressed, her only companion being her prayer book, for she was very frigid towards the other passengers, making no friends amongst them.

In less than two days they were at Galle, when a complete multitude of men, women, and children swarmed on to the deck of the *Lahore*, these additional passengers being chiefly Australians and Chinese.

The confusion of tongues heard at the building of the Tower of Babel was as nothing compared to what Miss Blake heard now. The *Lahore* presented a scene of hopeless confusion. Had this tremendous influx been of people only, it would have been bad enough in all conscience, but these men and women travelled like snails, with their houses on their backs, for positively, every individual had his and her own chair.

Miss Blake looked on in astonishment, expecting to see for each child that odious contrivance of the present century which is called a perambulator !

The formidable array of chairs was pushed, dragged, and kicked about regardless of consequences.

Amongst the Australians she saw some whom she knew, whom she had met at

Mr. Hudson's house in Tasmania. An animated conversation was kept up daily between herself and them. She never wearied of listening to the lavish praises these people bestowed on Tom Hudson. Her heart was still warm towards him. All this praise of him made the fire of her love burn brightly for the rest of the voyage. She believed in the truth, honour, and goodness of *him*, through whom her faith in these things had revived.

After having looked upon the cadaverous countenances of the Anglo-Indians for the past four months, it was quite a treat to her to see the rosy faces of the tall, broad-chested Australians, who were overflowing with robust and sound health, thanks to the magnificent climate of their sunny land. The "new passengers" somehow had heard of the burial at sea, and

of course wanted to know "who had died."

Many of them had known Mr. Hunt, and they said one to another, "So poor duckey Hunt is dead!" "Well," said another, "he was a very good fellow." And they talked about the days when he used to be on the Darling Downs, or at Geelong, up the river Yarra. And now they said, "Poor duckey is dead!"

In the course of a few days the *Lahore* anchored at Aden, where she coaled. Some silly passengers went on shore, the wise ones remained on the vessel.

Before long, the odd-looking, red-haired native feather-vendors came on board. To those who did not purchase, these queer men said, "What? you no buy!" seeming quite astonished that any person could withstand or resist the lovely plumes, some of them half-a-yard long,



which they offered for sale. Miss Blake took care to secure some exquisite white ones, at a few rupees each.

These feather-merchants of Aden followed her about, putting their goods right into her face, saying, "You buy, you buy."

At length the steamer was cleared of all these hawkers, and went to sea again. That screw which never tired, that engine which never wearied, but throbbed and beat like unto a man's heart—this engine *was* the heart of the *Lahore*, and gave her motion and power to bring "man nearer unto man."

The weather was red-hot; for a time the sea resembled in colour a molten topaz!

The motion of the *Lahore*, which steamed at the rate of sixteen knots an hour, did not cause a flutter or a breath to

stir. The atmosphere was as calm and as placid as the water. On and on they steamed till they reached Alexandria, where more purchases were made. Miss Blake now became possessed of an immense cream-coloured bernouse, made of camel's hair. No passengers ventured on shore here, as they had a dread of cholera.

As Aden may be reckoned the most disagreeable halting place on the homeward voyage, Malta may be considered the most pleasant. There was more buying and selling to be done here; for the men who came on board with lace and ornaments of mosaic and coral would take no denial, they were determined to sell their wares. The weather became gradually cooler; the ship rolled, and away she went, reaching England, and landing her passengers at Southampton, where there was

an anxious crowd to meet the friends who had arrived.

. . . . .

Eleanor Blake was living with her brother in peace and contentment. His letters had just been brought in ; he handed one to his sister. *The* letter which had been posted and re-posted at last was in her own hands. Generally it is the unexpected which happens, and the unexpected is sometimes very welcome ; for instance, when a lady receives unexpectedly a letter from a man whom she loves, by whom she thought she was put on a shelf for ever.

Miss Blake's joy was great indeed to find that this man had taken her down off the shelf, had thought about her, had actually written to her as follows :—

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TASMANIA, *June.*

MY DEAR MISS BLAKE,

Sometimes I have thought that you and I were parted for ever, but I trust this is not the case, though to me it does seem a very long time since I last saw you. Need I tell you that from the first day I saw you I have loved you with love which has kindled into passion? Can you then love me, and will you marry me? I come straight to the question, which to me is a most momentous one. To possess you as my wife, to be to you what no one else may be, is what I ask you to put within my power to fulfil. I write so that you may calmly think over it, and obey the answer your own heart gives to my question. I do not wish to persecute you. I know you once refused my love. I offer it to you again, because I remember you told me "that you did not *dislike* me," and because you inquired for me so anxiously when I was ill, thereby showing you were interested in my living or dying. If I have presumed too much in declaring a second time my love for you, I will spare myself the pain, and you the annoyance, of another meeting, as I only wait your answer to this, to decide if I am to come to New Zealand for you or not. If you can love me, I can make you happy. I long to meet you as my future wife. With best wishes,

I am,

Faithfully and affectionately yours,

TOM HUDSON.

“ Merciful heavens ! ” gasped Miss Blake, “ what will he think ? Why, this is October, and I have only just received his dear letter, which ought to have been answered at once.”

She fell on her knees and burst into tears ; then she got up again, as if she suddenly recollected that such a proceeding would not answer the letter.

It now occurred to the ruffled and perturbed mind of Eleanor Blake, that of course Mrs. Campbell had written to Mr. Hudson, telling him of her departure for Madras ; so she took comfort in the thought that Tom Hudson, long ere this, knew exactly the reason why his love letter remained unanswered by her. Of course she kissed this letter, and pressed it to her heart.

What else could she do with it ?

Why, she shed warm tears on to it, which was really very silly, because she nearly obliterated some of the words by so doing, and also made great smears across Mr. Hudson's letter. She dried her eyes, went on her knees once more, but not—to pray; no—but to think of Tom Hudson, to try and grow familiar with the idea that she was to be his wife.

Mr. Hudson's letter was plain, and to the point. In it was shown evidence of his nature. He scorned all figurative and high-flown language. For instance, he did not say that "true love had become extinct, like the moa of New Zealand, the only remains of which were to be found in museums."

No; he created the mind in which he believed out of his own, which was large, unselfish, tender, and true; hence, he

believed in true love being still abroad in the world, for he felt love true and deep for Miss Blake.

On the subject of "true love" Eleanor Blake was inspired and infallible; she believed in it firmly and decisively. Here was a man loving her all this long time, writing to her, asking her to become his wife. She could not wish to have more conclusive evidence of "true love" than this.

No; Eleanor had nothing to consider, she wanted no time for reflection. She rose from her kneeling posture, sat down and answered Mr. Hudson's letter. She knew her lover held what are called "very advanced views" on the subject of religion, but she flattered herself that she should cure him of "his nonsense," as she called it, in less than a week.

.   .   .   .   .   .   .

Mr. and Mrs. Hudson now live near Sandybay in a fine house, with good garden and grounds; they are very happy. Eleanor is as strict as ever in her religious opinions, but she never can induce her husband to speak of all those hair-splitting differences of sect, for they quite fail to interest him.

When she asks him about his doubts and his dissent, he answers—

“ My dear wife, I have no doubts, I do not dissent, for I know nothing about these things, and I refuse to waste my time in pondering over problems which we none of us can solve.” Mrs. Hudson never plunges further into the vortex of polemical discussion than this.









## CHAPTER VII.

A DEADLY HATRED, AND A GREAT BUT  
UNRETURNED LOVE.



AT times a father and his son might be seen riding over vast estates. They would be accompanied by thoroughbred, imported dogs, well-trained for sporting purposes, and be out shooting pheasants and partridges, also imported, and allowed for a short space of time to nestle in the warmth, and to bring out their young broods until they became sufficiently plentiful and

numerous to be shot down for men's amusement and pleasure. Poor innocent birds, just a soft little bundle of down and feathers! Must not be allowed to live, though they would occupy such a tiny, wee spot on the rich man's acres, who shot more birds than his own household could consume. Never mind, he had enjoyed his sport, and the dead birds that he did not want were thrown out to rot. The younger man was a bad shot; he did not care for sport, as his father called it. No—he loved better to be out amidst the beauties of nature for a different purpose, as often he might be seen with book and pencil soon after dawn transferring to his paper what he most admired. His father was annoyed at this taste of art which his son showed. Often in his anger he would tear up and utterly destroy his son's work,

who at last dared not draw or paint except by stealth.

The only sister he now had did not share his tastes, she did not sympathise with him. He felt, as indeed he was, alone. He stood by his window, looking over the vast expanse of country, with all its manifold beauties, which he desired to commit to canvas, but dared not. He felt that nature had endowed him with the gifts which make a painter.

If he could but get his father to allow him to become a student of the art he so loved, instead of keeping him there, how satisfied and contented he would be.

He was ambitious, and wished to make himself a name in the art to which he was so devoted. He did not feel bitter towards his father for destroying his work ; he knew he could produce it again. He had a good

disposition, a great nature, and soon forgave injuries done to himself. How *such* a father ever had *such* a son, it is impossible to say, the child being so superior to its parent. One whole month he was up very early each morning, working hard at his best loved picture. So early did he set to his work that scarcely any one of his father's household had risen. It was sweet summer time, and he worked thus early at his picture, which was almost finished, nearly complete; it merely wanted a little colour here, a touch there, and a soft shade. So the hours rolled on as he sat and worked with pleasure.

It so chanced that his father was astir one morning much earlier than usual, and saw his son's work.

Most men would have been glad, would have felt proud of the son who had such

genius, such talent; but not so this man. He called his son to him, with a coarse oath he ordered him to deface and destroy the picture at once, or—he would strike him down.

The pain and anguish this order caused the young man were great. He did not wish to act in defiance of his father whilst living under his roof, but—destroy his canvas he would not. Within himself he made this resolve. He loved this picture as a mother loves her child. He told his father he hoped rather to finish than to destroy it.

“No!” shouted the father; “you have produced the thing to please yourself, you shall destroy it to please me. I tell you no son shall be owned by me who spends his hours as you do.”

The young man summoned up sufficient

courage to say, " Father, I wish to go to Europe to become a student, and hereafter an artist; when I have achieved fame, and made a great name, you will be proud of me."

At these words, Walter Morris struck his son to the ground. He quickly rose up, and leaving the house, he went to that part of the garden where the lilacs were thickest, and buried his face in his hands. He thought of the time when he lived in Australia with his mother, whose conduct had been so corrupt; even she allowed him to practise his art. It was the only solace and comfort he had then, and now that he was in the midst of wealth, with a brutal and stern father, it would have been his joy and his solace once more. At his age he could not again submit to the indignities he had suffered that morning.

He put together such few possessions as he had. Taking them with him, he left his father's house, never again to enter it. The picture he left on the easel: destroy it he could not; he left that for other hands than his to do. He contrived, by dint of great economy and the sale of his pictures, to make enough money to take him to England, where, he became a student, hoping at the end of the year to set out for Italy, there, in that land, that home of art, to complete his studies.

He never saw Italy. Poor young fellow, he did not find such ready sale for the work of his pencil and brush in England, as he had done in Australia. He was pinched with want and hunger, finally attacked by fever, which was merciful, and put an end to his existence.

His fellow-students each contributed a



small sum, and so he was buried decently. Yet this young man wanted so little in this world; so little that his rich father could not possibly have missed the trifle had he sent it to him. He was treated much the same as the birds and the pheasants on the rich man's estates, hunted down, and killed at last!

Mr. Walter Morris hated his son; struck him down, and would not give him a crumb of his wealth; but death was merciful, and took this young man to rest and peace, which was better far than inheriting the wealth of such a father.

The Scorpion was again over this land; Walter Morris said to his daughter, "See! Antares is red and bright." Poor fools, they knew not what it meant.

The father and his daughter left the colony for England. Did they ever feel

any sorrow or remorse for their cruel conduct to the son and brother?

Not they. As to the daughter, she said, within herself, in her own greedy heart, "Now, I shall have all." She was pleased, because there would be no division; the property would be hers intact. So the greedy creature felt neither sorrow nor remorse. She did not grieve over his death; no, for by it, she had gained something.

. . . . .

In one of the warm, sunny, luxurious, bays which abound in the North Island, the autumn fruits were ripe, the golden corn gathered in, and the native toi-toi grass was nodding and bending its large heads of feathery blossom to every wind that stirred, and the parson bird, with his coat of jet black, and little snow-white

bands on his throat, just under his beak, was sitting on a branch of *nihau*, enjoying a feast of its berries. A young Maori girl, about eighteen years of age, was amusing herself in a garden, which was planted with all kinds of European flowers and trees.

She came and went at her pleasure. She was tall and lithe of limb, graceful in every movement, upright as a dart, passing in and out of the house and garden, when and as she wished, always bringing with her the sense of youth, of joyousness, and of sunlight.

She had a dark, rich face, a profusion of black hair, and wondrous eyes, large, black, and dreamy.

This girl was an orphan ; her father and mother, both of the Maori race, were drowned some years ago ; then the child

had been cared for by the servants at the Englishman's house. She had been there so long that her shyness had worn away, and in course of time she accompanied the owner of the house in his walks ; conversing with him, sometimes in her own tongue, but more frequently in his, for she spoke English fluently and correctly.

He was kind to her, as he was to every living thing, but he was cold to her ; in fact, he never thought of her at all. He suffered her to come and go as she liked, without persuasion on his part. He thought not of her, for that day he had received news from England, telling him that his wife was dying, and that she wished to be reconciled to him before death claimed her. This girl thought she should never be parted from the Englishman, whom she loved in silence, but with passion.

Her greatest happiness was to be near him, or listening to his voice, to be touched by him as he passed her in his garden, when her eyes, full of voluptuous love, would rest upon him. When with him, she felt a strange, passionate sweetness steal over her. She wanted, she wished, she knew not what; while to him she was—as nothing.

Now, she was ill at ease, for she heard of his approaching departure, but she never trusted herself to speak of it.

He saw and understood all that was passing in her mind, and in her heart. He saw the influence he had over her, but he heeded it not. He had no need of her.

Marry her he would not, though so many Europeans had intermarried with the Maori race; and dishonour her he could not. His mind revolted from such a crime.

She had been free to roam over his property since she was a child. He had become accustomed to her presence, but would have been quite as happy if she had left his neighbourhood, and joined her own tribe and her own people. So he let her be, for he loved her not.

. . . . .

One evening he came into his room, where she sat on the soft hearth-rug, with her beauty and her grace about her, and her eyes lustrous with sleeping passion.

He held out his hand, saying, "Good-bye. I go now to join the vessel which will take me to my own country."

She became deadly pale, she was seized with horror. Her heart was breaking, her happy day-dream was over. She rose up slowly, and said, "Good-bye, Arthur." As he left the house, she went to the open

window, and looked on his face as long as she could see it. A feeling of extreme bitterness was upon her, for she saw he loved her not; she was unsought, uncared for, unloved! and she felt desolate.

Day by day she pined and lamented, refusing all consolation. Sitting on the mat near his door, she would not taste either food or drink. Her head drooped, her eyes became dull, she continually uttered his name at long intervals—"Arthur, Arthur." Like the cry of some wounded bird, the wail of her distress was heard through Lord Arthur Vavasoura's house.

She never left the mat by his door. Night and day there she sat: there she died of a great love which consumed her, as fire consumes the fuel cast on to it. She is buried on the hill side, on his property,

facing the east, where it is warm and bright with the early rays of the rising sun, which shine on the snow-white rails around her grave.

There the air is fresh and sweet. The great waves of the rough salt sea break and splash at the foot of the hill, on the rocks a little beyond where she rests.

The winds, whose wings are heavy, and whose breath is sick with the heat of the lands across which they have blown, are sent out to range over these mighty pastures of the deep, to plunge and to play with its rolling billows, to dip their pinions over and over in its healing waters, before one breeze reaches her grave ; so they may be pure as she was pure !









## CHAPTER VIII.

MARRIAGE REQUIRES A GREAT AND AN  
ABIDING LOVE.



LORD ARTHUR VAVASOURA was the second son of an English nobleman. He married the daughter of a peer, a *lady* in her own right! How did this *lady* behave? How did she uphold the dignity of her own world, of the set in which she moved? She had sunk to the level of all disloyal wives; she married, and she allowed herself to be tempted; she gave way to the tempter. Thus she lost all claim to respect from her fellow creatures, *because* she had

lowered herself to the level of the women who can be tempted. She was not loyal to her sex. She did not uphold the dignity of women or of the married state, she was a fallen woman !

She continued her career of sin, living in Europe, disgracing the order to which she belonged.

Lord Arthur Vavasoura found it an easy and a pleasant task to select and purchase broad acres, well wooded and well watered, in some charming bay situated in the North Island of New Zealand, where he made his home, and passed his time in fishing, shooting, and yachting. Besides, he had his books; these were his companions most evenings. Living at peace and at ease, he was summoned unexpectedly by the wife who had wronged him so greatly. She desired, she yearned with a great

longing, to be at peace with her husband. She wanted the assurance of forgiveness from his own lips.

When he read the letter entreating him to go to her, his face became very white and wistful. His great brown eyes were suffused with tears, and full of passionate woe. He rose from his chair, paced up and down his room, evidently doing battle with his feelings, with his own nature, which was loyal and true. He knew he had been cruelly wronged by the woman he loved and trusted. Suddenly he stopped and said aloud, "Yes, I will go to her." And he went.

. . . . .

There they were, face to face, she on her dying couch, he standing beside it—the husband and the wife. He saw the wedding ring on her finger. There those

two were whom "God had joined together." Of what avail was that symbolic ring? What advantage, what power had that short ceremony which was performed by a muttering priest? Truly, none.

When the husband left his wife some years ago, she was a young and beautiful woman, of rounded form, and delicate outline. What he saw now shocked him. She had given way to bad passions of every grade. She had become a wreck. Her degradation touched him. He pitied her.

"I have wronged you : say you forgive me," were the only words she had strength to utter.

"I pity you from my heart ; and I will try to think of you with kindness, and with leniency."

At early dawn he stood alone by the deathbed of his wife. The birds were

pouring forth their first songs of the morning, when her spirit fled. "Truly, marriage requires a great and an abiding love," this man said, as he left the house of death.

. . . . .

Lord Arthur Vavasoura returned to his home in the beautiful sheltered bay in the colony. His servants told him of the death of the Maori girl, of her grief at his departure, and her refusal to take food.

He sighed, and said, "It is best so."

Her grave is well and carefully kept ; it stands out in relief from its dark background of trees and shrubs, amongst which the little parson bird sings to his mate. He loves this spot, for here, catching the sea breeze, his favourite nihau tree grows.

She is not alone in her solitude ; for on her grave the sun pours his warm rays, and the winds and the sea are close by her.





## CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH MANY THINGS ARE SAID AND DONE.

**M**RS. CAMPBELL was one of those women of whom it may be said, "She was never less alone than when alone." Sitting by a cheerful fire one afternoon, in a deep meditation "on things in general," she was interrupted by her servant, who announced "Miss Marchly."

"Ah ! I am so glad to see you ; come to my room, and take off your wraps ; you will, of course, stay to dinner. I am having some people here this evening ; only a



musical party, so don't look so distressed about your dress. I will give you some charming flowers from the conservatory to wear at your throat and in your hair ; then you will be quite smart," said Mrs. Campbell.

" Flowers play a very important part in ' your world ' and in your estimation," said Miss Marchly.

" Yes, indeed, I am devoted to them," said Mrs. Campbell, and she repeated the following lines—

Charmantes fleurs ! pour plaire,  
Vous n'avez seulement qu'a paraître  
Plus heureuses que nous, ce n'est que le trépas  
Qui vous fait perdre vos appas ;  
Plus heureuses que nous, vous mourez pour  
          renaitre  
Quand une fois nous cessons d'être.  
          Aimables fleurs, c'est pour jamais !

and then continued, " I like to see my friends well-dressed, and I like to dress well

myself, for to me it seems that dress is to the body what language is to thought. It pains and hurts me to hear people express themselves in coarse, vulgar language, and bad taste in dress equally offends my eye."

"You are so particular though in everything. Good gracious! see how neat your whole house is; not a pin out of its place," said Miss Marchly.

"Yes, I must admit I am very tidy and exact in my habits of life and in my ideas. I am sure I have the organ of 'order' largely developed, for I cannot bear to go into a room and see work, music, or books, littered about in a kind of pitch-and-toss fashion, which untidy persons call 'artistic carelessness;' nor do I like to see a number of articles which are not in use, or at all likely to be, distributed over the apartment, making it

slovenly and inelegant, and then hearing lazy girls say that 'it gives them a sense and a feeling of profusion' to have such an abundance of old papers, scraps of embroidery and other rubbish, in a disorderly condition. Such expressions are too transparent for me; through them I can see the lazy and untidy temperament showing itself."

"Is Major Cambell at home?" asked Miss Marchly.

"No, he is not; but I expect him every moment. He went to-day to the 'sheep-run,' to ascertain how things are going on there."

"It is an enormous expense for him to be in Parliament, and obliged to leave his property to be managed, or mismanaged, as the case may be, by hired overseers and shepherds."

“And the news from Europe is worse and worse every mail; for some time the wool has been steadily declining in price. I really don’t dare to speak about it, for my husband always says that ‘next year, matters will mend.’ But with each succeeding year I find that ‘matters’ are as bad as ever. Sheep-farming is a business I don’t understand, so I do not attempt to argue about it. And now that there is every prospect of war, the price of wool in Europe has fallen very low,” said Mrs. Campbell.

“No doubt you feel anxious about these things,” replied Miss Marchly.

“Oh, here he comes, up the gravel drive. He scarcely ever talks of anything but sheep and politics, so if he asks you any questions about flocks, mind you tell him that you don’t know a ram from a

ewe, so he will be effectually stopped upon that subject," said Mrs. Campbell.

In a few moments Major Campbell came in. Sure enough, he asked Miss Marchly if she had seen any lambs on the Plains this year, and if her father's flocks looked well.

"Dear me! I am sorry, but I really don't know a ram from a ewe, so I cannot give you any information about the flocks," said she.

"It is very easy to distinguish them, for a ram has long twisted horns on each side of his head. A pretty state of things we have come to—a 'runholder's' daughter to say she knows nothing about sheep! Well, young lady, the sooner you learn something about them, the better," said he in a rude, ill-tempered manner. As soon as dinner was over, he began to

grumble and scold about the household expenditure. He said "his wife had no business to invite people to the house, for he did not wish for company ; if he did, he could go to his club, and she—must learn to do without it."

Soon the guests arrived, about a dozen people. After coffee was served, the music began. A lady of the Plains who was esteemed a musician sat down to the piano. Her music consisted of a canter up and down the instrument, and a kind of general scrimmage from the bass to the treble, and back again, some chords banged and thumped out, then a few final flourishes.

Major Campbell went up to his wife and said, "I am going to form a party at cards ; we are going to have a game of ' whist,' as I can't stand that infernal row ;"

so he and three other kindred spirits sat down to the game.

Of course, this scrambling and banging was not Mrs. Campbell's idea of music. No, she had a soul, and she loved sweet sounds. She did not care for mere noise. When asked to play, she sat down and gave some of Mendelssohn's songs without words, in a most charming and expressive manner. Few of her guests appreciated her music, it was not loud enough to suit their tastes.

A gentleman was asked for a "solo on his clarionette," who imagined he played that instrument well. He began, and he went on evidently to his own satisfaction, if not to that of his listeners. By Mrs. Campbell, this solo and its performer were aptly compared to the noise made by an old gander when he has lost his mate. She

had heard quite enough of *such music* for one evening; and as her husband had finished his rubber at whist, she was not sorry to find that carriages were announced, and her guests were departing.

Major Campbell professed no religion; he belonged to no sect, to no denomination. His wife still was, as she ever had been, a Roman Catholic. She was not by any means zealous. Now, she would not work sacramental vestments, or give up her time to do embroidery for the altar. Her faith had been gradually, but surely, on the wane, on the decline, since the days when she did such work in England. She was, however, generous, and, out of her abundance, she gave largely, both to the Church and to the convent, in money and in kind. All sorts of good things found their way into the convent, which were her gifts to the nuns.



These women who were consecrated, and devoted to God and His service, made much of Mrs. Campbell ; they paid her every mark of respect and every attention. For, within the walls of a convent, riches and money are esteemed and as well loved as they are abroad in the world. These nuns were deferential and obsequious to her because she was rich !

The golden calf is set up and worshipped by men and women in the cloister as much as it is elsewhere.

“ Look into the world, and you will see men esteemed according as they are rich.” Mrs. Campbell soon found out the truth of these words.

She would not give up the religion of her ancestors yet ; to do so, she considered, would be an impertinence to them, but for all that, she was not satisfied with this

faith, ancient as it was. She said *her* prayers were never answered, never noticed; but she took the blame to herself. Perhaps she did not pray aright, was not sufficiently fervent—she did not know. But she was still “biding her time,” as she told Dr. Burnside years ago.

. . . . .

The session was over. Major Campbell and all the members of the house were back on the “Plains;” also some members, from other provinces of New Zealand, had come to see these much-talked-of “Plains.” It had been decided that a ball should be given; all the members’ wives were expected to attend it.

When Major Campbell reached his home, he went up to his wife, who was busy at her flower borders, with a small trowel in her hand; she was removing

hyacinths. He accosted her in a more civil and pleasant tone of voice than was usual with him. "We have held a meeting to-day, and have decided to give a large ball to the members who are on a visit here. Now I want you to spend some money about this—on your dress I mean. You must go and buy everything new for this ball. I must not see you in any old finery, for everybody there will be 'dressed, regardless of expense,' so see about it at once."

"I have a ball dress, which has been worn only twice; it also has the merit of having been sent to me from England, and is far better than anything I can purchase here; certainly, I shall not buy anything new. How is it you are deserting your colours now? You, who are always saying how necessary it is for me to give

up my little pleasures on account of the expense, now you turn round and ask me to spend money in a way and in a manner that is not only unnecessary but useless. I refuse to do it," said Mrs. Campbell.

"You spiteful vixen! Then I won't be seen with you. I see what your game is; you want to look shabby and dowdy to disgrace me, and to annoy the ladies who will be there, and who are desirous that this ball should be a most brilliant affair, and reflect credit on its promoters. They will all look well, and I am not going to be made uncomfortable by hearing sneering remarks passed on anybody or on anything belonging to me," said her husband.

"Oh! oh! I see now how it is; you fear my appearance might reflect upon yourself. It is not that you care in the least how I look; as far as I am personally

concerned it is of no importance. The fear is, lest I should be a spot or a flaw upon you! It appears to me that I am to have a care for my dress, for my appearance, so that I may not be regarded as a blot on the showy vulgarity of the Plains, and on its tawdry tinsel!"

Mrs. Campbell stood erect and pale, as she slowly and scornfully uttered these words. She looked straight at the man who had insulted her, and continued—

"Sir, I have yet to learn that *I* could be a flaw or a blot in *any* ball-room, no matter how simple or how plain my apparel might be. Nature has given me what none can take from me."

Golden beams of wrath flashed from her fine hazel eyes as she spoke, for she knew she was beautiful to look upon.

"What, pray, are these women of the

Plains like? How do they for the most part conduct themselves? Why, in their finery they look like jackdaws in peacocks' feathers. Nature has given them little round eyes and red hair, *retroussé* noses, and mouths which reach from ear to ear; but in spite of all this, most of them have some man who dances attendance upon them, whom they call *a friend*, and who follows them about like a 'tame tom cat.' But enough of this. Are not these women known as the 'Plains' throughout the length and breadth of the land? If a stranger asks about the Plains, the women are pointed out, and he is told, 'There they are.' There are some true gentlewomen in this land, I admit; but they may be compared to the fine days we get here, being both rare and few in number. To fill the ballroom, you must invite all sorts of nondescripts. These are

the people for whom I am expected to bedeck myself!" And she walked indignantly from the room.

So the breach between these two was getting wider and wider.

Major Campbell was selfishly obtuse to his wife's feelings. She was a woman of great natural vivacity, to which was united considerable sharpness of speech. When speaking under a feeling of irritation, she said much that might be misinterpreted by those who heard her words in cold blood, unless they took into consideration the facts which had annoyed her.

Any reasonable person would have thought Major Campbell had heard enough about the expected ball, and that he would have let the subject drop; but no such thing happened, for as soon as dinner was over, he returned to "the charge," and

asked his wife "if she had considered again about this ball."

"No. Why should I do so? For some time past, my evening dress has been like the laws of the Medes and Persians, 'it altereth not.' You think it would be a blot on the grandeur of the women who will be there, so I shall not go," she replied.

"Medes and Persians be d——d," said he, as he took out a pocket-book, and began to make figures and add them up, muttering to himself all the time.

His wife said, "You are as mysterious as a Rosicrucian, making hieroglyphics there."

"I know nothing about Rosicrucians; who were they?" he asked.

"The followers of the 'Rosy Cross,'" answered Mrs. Campbell.



“ Ugh ! You will soon have your cross to carry in earnest, I can tell you. But don’t bother me, don’t you see I am reading ? ” he said snappishly.

“ I did not speak till you asked me a question,” replied his wife.

“ There’s every chance of a Continental war, and by Jove ! it will be a stiff business if it should break out ; but it won’t make much difference to me, for the ‘ runs ’ have been going to ‘ the bad ’ for a long while, and if this war should be declared, why—they will go to the Devil altogether,” said Major Campbell.

His wife retired, for she was still smarting under the insults he had heaped upon her. Silent contempt was the only way in which she could resent what she could not forget. Mrs. Campbell said little to him, but she thought much. Till quite recently,

her husband had led her to believe he was well off, nay—rich. Certainly she knew nothing of his affairs or of the state of his finances. All she knew was that he was a rich man when she married him ; *that* she was sure of. All these mysterious hints he was constantly throwing out were not lost upon her. She at once gave notice to all her servants that she should not require their services after the month had expired. Her horses and carriage were “ put down ; ” no more flowers were bought. By doing a great deal of work herself, she contrived to manage with one maid-servant.

Mrs. Campbell was no dreamer ; no—she believed in action prompt and quick. Her conscience approved of what she had done ; for she had the satisfaction of knowing that she was not incurring any debts. Her husband continued to make his hiero-

glyphics, and to mutter to himself. The fact is, he was trying to calculate, to reckon, what his next season's wool would bring him ; how much money it would yield.

He knew he had many private debts, personal expenses, which were not defrayed. He spent large sums on what he considered were actual necessities, for the sole gratification of himself. Now that he found war was looming in the future, he felt just a little uncomfortable, because he knew that troubles in Europe made troubles in the colonies, so he thought he would give up some of his "actual necessities," as he was pleased to call them, for really he did not see his way clear to pay for them, should the wool fall lower in price. On second thoughts he said, "How people will talk if I begin to retrench."

So it ended by him giving up nothing !

He was one of those persons who intend or wish to do half-a-dozen things, and never do one !

If this man had any scruples concerning the debts and liabilities he was daily incurring, those scruples were like bats in sunshine, for they took wing immediately. He was generous to himself only. He gave up nothing, but waited till it was taken from him.

So he continued to lead the same old life. Mrs. Campbell denied herself in everything ; no visitor ever entered her house now. She was too much occupied with her own business ; having dismissed the governess, she educated her two children herself.

Family jars and matrimonial dissensions were the order of the day in this house.

It is considered very clever to adapt


one's self to one's fortunes; so Mrs. Campbell must be considered very clever indeed, for she at once adapted herself to her circumstances.





## CHAPTER X.

### TROUBLES IN BOTH HEMISPHERES.

AR declared ! Sad news was constantly arriving in the various colonies from the seat of war in Europe. Although separated by so many thousands of miles, the colonists, both rich and poor, young and old, each and all felt the deepest interest in everything concerning the combatants. Of course they well knew that the "great trouble" in Europe would bring incalculable loss, and in many cases utter ruin upon themselves. This war would

cause their lands and their stock to fall in price and in value rapidly. Besides, during war, their great export—wool—was not in demand, either in the English or foreign markets; there were no hands to work it up, every man had gone to fight. This was a heavy loss to all colonists, as they derived the greater part of their incomes from the sale of this, their staple commodity.

But the colonists said, “What are our losses and our sufferings, when compared to those which are felt by the French people? The whole nation steeped in the horrors of war! That fair and lovely country, what she suffered through destruction of her own fair face, and the bloodshed of her brave sons, who never murmured, but gave their lives willingly for their country.”

France needed them; that was all they required to know. *Mourir pour la patrie* was their national song.

*La belle France*, how you were insulted and trampled upon, your children tortured and killed, their hearts' warm life-blood spilt by those odious Germans!

It was summer time, the ripe corn stood in the fields, ready for the sickle of the reaper. The only reaper that corn knew was the army of Prussia, which trampled the golden ears out on to the ground, under the hoofs of its horses.

The Scorpion was stretched across the land; his heart was red and angered. Antares glittered and sparkled in his rage over France. "It is an evil omen," said the citizens and the peasants one to another.

In the month of September the battle



of Sedan was fought. Marshal MacMahon was wounded, and his horse killed under him. The command was then taken by a brave general, just returned from Algiers. The French intrenched themselves on the crown of a hill on the north of Sedan; here they fought bravely. Most of the French cavalry regiments made brilliant onslaughts. Above all others, those Chasseurs d' Afrique behaved with the utmost gallantry; but do as they would, it was useless. Fortune, that blind goddess, favoured the Prussians. The Emperor Napoleon the Third was defeated, and obliged to surrender. He left France in a travelling carriage, on his way to Wilhelmshöhe, as the King of Prussia's prisoner.

In Paris, all the theatres and places of amusement were closed, because the

whole country was in mourning. France mourned for the deaths, for the agonies, the sufferings of her brave sons; and no wonder.

Immense numbers of wounded were in all directions, Turcos and Zouaves crawling painfully through the streets, wounded in the legs and feet, dragging their slow way along at every step—others with their heads bound up in dirty cloths, their gay, bright dresses stained with blood—French and Germans lying side by side on straw, with the Sisters of Mercy going from one to another, laying ice on their wounds, and offering the poor fellows bread and refreshments. Every available establishment was converted into a temporary hospital for wounded soldiers. Churches, railway cars, and even the waiting-room of a great railway terminus, one quite familiar to English

tourists, were full of agonised and mutilated Frenchmen.

Yet the pain and misery which go hand and hand with war were not deemed a fate hard enough for them to bear by their inveterate enemies, who actually were so devilish, in their rage and spite, as to set fire to, and burn the small town of Bazeilles. The Bavarians and Hessians (let it be told to their shame), set fire to all the houses in this town, because some few of its inhabitants had joined the French soldiers.

The women, children, and aged men of this town were burned to death, or stifled by smoke, caused by the Bavarians stuffing straw between all the shutters, and then setting all in a blaze.

Those who were fortunate enough to escape this conflagration, as well as many thousands of French soldiers, sought refuge

in Belgian territory, where they were kindly treated. At Namur, the women and children came out to meet them with aprons full of bread, and invited them to eat.

All the Australian colonies suffered extremely during the Franco-Prussian war. Many failures were recorded ; and a panic, a crash, came upon New Zealand. In Europe the war continued to rage as fiercely as ever. The whole population of France was bewildered by these events. All her people were excited. In the cafés, where the evening papers were read by snatches, the war news was furiously discussed.

Then there were the griefs and tears of young girls and of wives being separated from their lovers and their husbands, many of whom never returned, so the old homes and hearths were left desolate.

Prayers were poured forth by truthful, faithful hearts—the ladies of Paris, the peasants of the country, the whole nation, from the Emperor and Empress downwards, prayed. The whole of Catholic France prayed to God for the success of its armies, prayed that they might conquer heretical and Protestant Germany.

But their prayers were of no avail; they were of no use. God heeded them not. Then the priests and the high dignitaries of the Church bethought them of processions! So, wonderful images of the Virgin and of Christ were carried about to propitiate Deity, but all to no purpose.

The God of the Christians heeded neither the people nor their prayers.

The whole land was given over to the old gods—Ares, with his sister Eris, and his sons and companions, Deimos and

Phobos. So it was, for the whole nation was besieged by War, Strife, Horror, and Fear.

On the Plains, a number of "run-holders" were ruined. In the city, numerous failures were heard of. Many names were mentioned as not likely to weather the storm should the war continue.

So it came to pass that Major Campbell could hold out no longer. He had speculated largely in land, which was worth little or nothing, now that Europe was in arms; hence he was utterly ruined. His wife was sitting in the shade of the trees with her children when he went up to her and told his tale, in an abrupt, coarse way.

"You must leave this house, and all that it contains, for now it belongs to my creditors. Not a d——d thing can be

saved from the general wreck—all must go. The mail is in again, and brings bad news; the war still rages, and this colony will go to the D——,” said he.

Mrs. Campbell did not speak; she went indoors, and at once commenced to pack up the wearing apparel belonging to her children and to herself; the next day they left the house for ever. She now gave up all that had made her life bearable in the colony; her garden, conservatory, and plantations, all were gone from her. She did not expect this ruin so soon or so suddenly, nor did she ever think it would be of so “sweeping” a nature. Until now, she believed her husband had sufficient common-sense to secure and save *something*; now, she found such was not the case. He had killed the goose for the sake of its golden eggs, which eggs he had enjoyed in

his own way. He had lived beyond his income, which was large enough, had he been commonly prudent, to enable him to save much, but he had not done this.

Now, for the first time, she discovered the deplorable state in which her husband's affairs were. Every comfort to which she had been accustomed since her childhood was resigned by her without a murmur.

Major Campbell was engaged for a time with his lawyer, who had to "wind up" his affairs; but, so long as he had a pound note in his pocket, he made himself comfortable, and enjoyed the accommodation which hotels afforded. He went to the humble dwelling where his wife and children now lived; he asked her "what she proposed doing."

"I intend to go to England to grandmere. My means are too small to permit



me to live in an expensive place like the City of the Plains, where everything is an extortionate price, even if I wished to do so, which I do not. For it has a notoriously bad climate, with typhoid fever and diphtheria ever rampant," she answered.

"Your 'means,' as you term it, are devilish 'mean,' and no mistake," replied her husband.

"This is no time for low puns or vulgar jests; my money, little as there is of it, will take us to England. Your inordinate and intense selfishness have brought this poverty upon us. You have squandered large sums upon yourself, and have saved nothing for your children, who are not even educated yet. Your boy is not only the eldest, but he is the *one* son you have. He should have inherited landed property, and have had a fortune; but through your

mismanagement, love of ease, and indolence and self-gratification, he will have nothing but what he works for and what he earns. In one sense he will, indeed, be like those fabled birds the martlets, which are without feet, because they have no land on which to set foot; neither has your son any land. He must, like those birds, learn to rise by the wings of virtue and of merit, and trust to nothing else," she answered him.

Major Campbell did not expect such a harangue as this, though he knew his wife could be severe in her speech. He said, "I shall go my way, you may go yours; only, mind you take care of the children."

"I have not forgotten that I am a mother as well as a wife. My son and daughter shall never have cause to blush for any actions of mine. It is true, sir, to

you I owe little or nothing, but, to my children, I owe everything," she replied with warmth.

This man knew she was not a common product of nineteenth century civilization, namely, a wife who claims as wide a licence for herself as her husband allows himself for his amours. Thus he felt sure that his children and his name were safe in her keeping, for she had never fallen to the level of those women who can be tempted. Men would as soon think of tempting Diana, as of tempting Mrs. Campbell. She was on that point invulnerable. Her name had ever been without reproach, and her husband knew it.

"Why should I stay on these Plains," she asked herself, "when they torture me with remembrances that are bitter, and pain me with memories of my married

life? No, I will leave them." And she left for England the following week.

One dark, damp morning, when the usual pall of heavy fog hung over the Plains and its city, Major Campbell went into port, and from thence he sailed to one of those beautiful and luxuriant islands in the Pacific, where he passed his life amongst its native population, living on the products of its fertile soil. Some Americans visited the island to trade with the natives; from them he learned news of the outer world, and from them he procured newspapers. He was one of those men who never make an opportunity to reinstate themselves in their former position, or to recover their lost fortunes. He existed on this island. He was like the lobster, which, when left high and dry on the rocks, will remain there and die, rather than exert

itself to get back to the sea. It waits for the sea to come to it. The world is full of human lobsters, men who are stranded on the rocks of business, who, instead of putting forth their own energy, are waiting for some grand billow of good fortune to set them afloat. So it was with Major Campbell; he continued to wait for an opportunity which never came.

During her voyage Mrs. Campbell had ample time for reflection; the subject which thrust itself to the front was religion. She knew that in the days of ancient Rome the educated classes and the patri- cians looked upon religion as a mere instrument of the State, with which it hoped to keep the lower orders of the people quiet.

From European news she learnt that the united prayers of a Catholic nation

were of no avail. The prayers of bishops and of priests were not heeded any more than her own were. For here was a Catholic nation actually given over by God to heretics.

This was sufficient proof to her that prayer was of no avail.

With nuns and other holy women she was disgusted, for each time that she had called at the convent, since her husband had lost his wealth and his property, they had left her to stand in the passage. These "pious virgins" in their seclusion had heard of her reverses, and now that she had nothing to give them, they did not want her.

When she was well off, there was such a fussing and fuming, one nun would vie with another as to who should show her the most attention. But being no longer rich, they esteemed her not.

As to her ancestors, she said "they must put up with and bear the impertinence she was about to offer to their memories ;" for she gave up her old faith, because she could no longer believe in it.

Mrs. Campbell found the voyage tedious, though she went on board a splendid steamer, which took her from the colonies to England in two months! How different from the long voyage she made in the *Ulswater* some years ago. Being tired of reading novels, she thought she would write one.





## CHAPTER XI.

WHAT THE MOTTO SEEMED TO SAY.

**W**HEN jotting down some remarks and some notes for her novel, on the back of an old letter which she had received from her brother, her eye caught the crest and its motto, which were stamped on the paper. She read in clear distinct words, *Ne quæ te extra conari*. She thought this motto had something ominous in it, and she had better not attempt to write a novel. She would not like her work to be a failure.



Then she thought of her husband's crest and motto, which said, "In the Lord is my hope." "That is all fudge," she said aloud. She had hoped for so many years, and for so many things, and had always been disappointed; so she determined to have nothing more to do with hope. As far as she was concerned, it was "a snare and a delusion."

She looked again at the Hudson coat of arms, at its crest and its motto. She preferred the advice and the injunction given by this; there *was* commonsense in it. Certainly, the arms had a leaning towards pagan times, but she liked them all the better for that, Its three white owls were Minerva's own birds; there they were, looking so wise, on a black shield with a silver chevron. She looked at them so long, till at last she fancied they spoke to

her, and the words they uttered were, *Ne quæ te extra conari*; and above the wise birds was a golden cockatrice, with a sting in its tail! So she folded up the old letter and put it away. Still it seemed to her that the wind amongst the sails resolved into a strange voice, and she heard again the same words that the white owls, the birds of wisdom, had uttered before, "*Ne quæ te extra conari.*" So the writing of a novel was given up.

And let me ask, pray why should not an owl speak as well as an ass? Mrs. Campbell was quite as willing and as attentive a listener to the white owls as ever Balaam was to his ass.

Whilst Mrs. Campbell was on the high seas, on her homeward voyage, and her husband was luxuriating on an island in the Pacific, the Emperor of the French was

in sad trouble. He wrote with his own hand to the King of Prussia—" *Mon Frère, n'ayant pu mourir à la tête de mon armée, je dépose mon épée au pied de votre Majesté.*" This fallen Emperor was most anxious that he should not be exhibited to his own soldiers. In order to avoid this, he was exposed to a great humiliation, for he had to pass through the lines of the Prussian army. Whose pen can describe the mental anguish and bodily sufferings of this man? He knew what the French as a nation would think and say. He thought of his wife and of his son, and bearing all this acute mental agony, he—lived! How tenacious a human being is of life.

What must have been the disappointment of France and of her people when it was known that the Emperor had surrendered! Great, indeed! How bitter

must have been the grief and sorrow of the mother and her son. Yet they lived through it all.

On the Flattestbury Plains and its city there was much trouble and suffering. The "runholders" became bankrupt, and their homes were broken up. Large business firms in the city stopped payment, and their doors were closed. But these people lived through it all!

In France the Emperor and his dynasty were formally deposed; a republic was declared amidst the enthusiastic applause of the Parisians. These people cried, wept, laughed, shouted, embraced, kissed, danced and sang, marched up and down; soldiers and civilians, men, women, and children, all waving flags along the Boulevards, with torches in the evening, making every possible sign of popular gladness.

Such was the temper of the capital of France after her amazing defeat.

It has been said, and very truly, that "the worst thing which can befall an individual or a country is loss of heart." One thing is certain, the French have not "lost heart."

Neither have the people on the Flattest-bury Plains or in its city "lost heart." No sooner had they "gone through the court" than more sheep were forthcoming to drive out on to those endless plains of tussocks! In the city the shops and warehouses were all newly painted, and their windows were filled with tempting goods.

Balls, parties, and theatricals were the "order of the night." *Ladies* still had their masculine *friends*; they still kept up their Platonic affections! Such was the temper of the people of the "Plains" after

their amazing losses ; and the women of these Plains remained as plain as ever !

. . . . .

Mrs. Campbell arrived safely in London, where she stayed a week with her two children. She wrote to grandmere more than once, for she wished the ancient dame to get accustomed to the thought that she and her son and daughter were going to live with her. She did not like to take her by surprise, for great and sudden joy sometimes has as mischievous an effect upon old people as sudden grief has.

At the end of a week she travelled by train to Nottingham, where she found the carriage and horses awaiting her at the station. In a few hours she was in the old family mansion at Strelley, locked in dear grandmere's arms. When the old lady released her, she presented her two

children, saying, "They are your first great-grandchildren." The old dame said, "Yes, and I am proud of them, and glad to have them with me."

The next morning, when the young people were amusing themselves by feeding a glorious peacock, which strutted about the lawn, and up and down the terrace, picking up the pieces of biscuit thrown to it, Mrs. Campbell and grandmother were having a *tête-à-tête* conversation in the shade of the laburnums and lilacs, through whose leaves the morning sun strayed. The air at Strelley was sweet with the scent of a thousand flowers. This spot of earth was seven miles away from the busy city of Nottingham. The only sounds these two women heard were the voices of the birds and the humming of the bees. Evidently Mrs. Campbell had

been telling her grandmother all about her married life when living on the Flattest-bury Plains, for the old lady said—

“I am sorry, my dear, and I regret to hear all this.”

“Oh! don’t regret, don’t be sorry, for I am with you, which to me is an immense joy; I am back again in old England,” replied Mrs. Campbell.

“But, my dear, a woman should live with her husband; they did so in my young days. Why not do so now?” asked grandmere.

“You must remember it is a very long time since you were young; manners and customs have altered and changed much since your young days. I assure you that now-a-days many married people live apart from each other; and those who live together, that is, under the same roof,



are often not on speaking terms with each other ! Besides, circumstances alter cases. I could not live with Major Campbell. After trying my utmost, I had to give him up. He was more even than I could endure. Why, he was to me an—*incarnated blister* ! always drawing my cross humours to the surface, and making me perpetually sore. No woman can surely be expected to take a blister to her heart and love it. I found marriage to be a profoundly disagreeable institution, and in my opinion it is generally as immoral a one as it is unpleasant,” said Mrs. Campbell.

“ Perhaps it is so, in the present day. Certainly an incarnated blister is not a loveable object. But I wonder much, and am astonished to hear what you say—you are so good to look at, and surely a beautiful woman is still accounted much. I often

wonder why God made so many ugly faces, for it is a hard fate for a woman to be born ugly," said grandmere.

"Truly, yes; my husband admired my physical and intellectual beauty. He liked to be the owner and the possessor of a fair face, as you express it, but that is not love; and you know if love grows, it grows; but you cannot force love, you cannot put it into the soil and make it grow where and as you like or wish. No, dear grandmere, love won't bear the treatment of an ordinary plant, because it is essentially an extraordinary one," said Mrs. Campbell.

"Well, my dear, the carriage is ready. I am going into the city, where I have business to transact, and I will also get the tickets for the opera, as I promised to be there on the opening night; so you can

write your letters whilst I am away." As she drove into the city, grandmere said to herself, "Here is a handsome woman who, since her wedlock, has passed a joyless life and a mutilated existence; living to be sacrificed daily to the insolence of a coarse and selfish man." "Poor dear," soliloquised the old lady, "she has paid during many years of her life, the most terrible of all penalties for the mistake and illusion of her early womanhood. She so clever, so accomplished, so tender-hearted and sweet-tempered, to be so sacrificed. No wonder she became tired of her husband, under whose harsh tones and coarser nature she shrank. She was weary of him and of his gross brutal language. No wonder she came back to me! But in adversity they always do come back, in prosperity never."

The old dame had by this time reached

her lawyer's office. She made her will, leaving her ample fortune to be equally divided between her two great-grandchildren. To Mrs. Campbell she left an annuity, together with her house, carriage, and all personal effects ; this done she felt relieved. Good opera was what Mrs. Campbell always enjoyed. She looked as well as ever, though she had a habit of saying, " her good looks were dimmed," but nobody else thought so. She wore black, with natural roses, damask, and cloth of gold as ornaments, and most splendid diamonds. Grandmere was very proud of her, and loved her dearly.

. . . . .

After a glorious autumn came a severe and cold winter—the whole country was wrapped in a mantle of snow. Then came spring, cold, sharp, and boisterous, with

incessant drizzling rain, a sort of endless and interminable Scotch mist. Mrs. Campbell was the only one of the household who complained of this kind of weather. Grandmere had known it for more than eighty years, and the young people, as her great-grand-children were always called, were accustomed to the unfailing and unceasing damp, dripping drizzle in New Zealand; but Mrs. Campbell had lived in Tasmania, consequently she knew the joys of living under a blue sky and a golden sun.

She said, "When it rains in Tasmania, it does it thoroughly, and gets the disagreeable duty over as soon as possible, which is so much more pleasant to mankind than this English rain which comes gently, but every day."

"Ah!" said grandmere, "English rain is something like life's vexations, which do

not usually come upon one like a storm descending the mountain, or like a whirlwind, but softly and insidiously they come and annoy us daily."

The spring became summer; and one sultry day in June, when the young people were out in the garden watching the butterflies, their attention was riveted by the sudden appearance of three beautiful purple emperors which had settled on a rosebush. They were so fresh and so gorgeous, it could not have been long since they emerged from the chrysalis; the children watched these insects in silence. The house was very quiet, grandmere had complained of the room feeling "stuffy." She said "she did not breathe well;" but as all the French windows were wide-open on to the verandah, and the room was filled with the perfume of countless flowers, it

could not be so, it must surely be only her fancy.

Mrs. Campbell sat writing ; grandmere was in her arm-chair—she appeared to be sleeping. So she was, for she was sleeping the long sleep from which she never awoke. She passed away, her soul, her spirit flitted away in June. Like as a butterfly leaves its chrysalis, and wings its way into sunshine, so did the old woman's spirit leave its chrysalis, and wing its way from time to eternity.





## CHAPTER XII.

A GUILTY CONSCIENCE NEEDS NO ACCUSER.

**I**N the southern hemisphere the Scorpion was again stretched out. He lay quite across the heavens, shining in all his glory; his great red heart Antares flashed with anger, for there were foul deeds to be done, and death would come to many, trouble was in store for many in that hemisphere.

Walter Morris and his daughter were out again from Europe. They were like two troubled spirits not able to find rest. By some means or other, the whole history of



the family drama, and the particular rôle he had played in it, were known far and near. The *on dits* of the neighbourhood concerning the present life of these two people were of a disgraceful nature. The daughter inherited a love of intoxicating drinks, as well as the *other* vices of her parents. No man wished to marry her, no woman would have her acquaintance. From her childhood to womanhood she had never tried to correct her faults, or to amend her failings. Mr. Walter Morris was shunned by men; he could not rest anywhere; his conscience accused him of the death of his son.

Nemesis and Até were still at their work. The father and his daughter were again living on their broad acres and vast estates in New Zealand.

About this time a great many emigrants

had arrived in the colony, many of whom were not engaged as servants, so they sought employment up country on the various farms and sheep stations.

One evening a man called at Mr. Morris's sheep-run; he went to the men's hut to ask if there would be any chance of getting work on that "run." Mr. Morris saw him, and asked "what he wanted."

The man told him he wanted work, and begged for a little food, as he had tasted nothing all that day; the poor fellow said "he was willing to do a day's work, if Mr. Morris would allow him to have shelter for the night, and some food."

But his appeals were in vain, his words were useless. The man who was inside the hut heard his master's refusal to help this poor traveller, who was footsore and weary, faint and famishing for want of

food. Making use of coarse, brutal language, Mr. Morris ordered "him off," and as soon as he was moving on, the rich man went to his house.

Great gloom and intense stillness had prevailed during the latter part of the day. Within the last few minutes immense masses of thunder-cloud had gathered in the sky. Now and then the huge bulging inky pall was cleft with fiery suddenness by lightning tongues that darted athwart and across in weird blue zigzag lines, then darkness won again, and in torrents the rain poured down.

Walter Morris looked from earth to sky, and welcomed grimly the monotonous melancholy with which nature seemed to approve and sanction his own mood and conduct. On the broad verandah of his house stood this man and his daughter.

She watched the weather with much satisfaction, and laughed as she said—

“That man, tramping out there, will get a good drenching on these bare plains.”

In the higher and stricter sense of the words, Miss Morris had neither heart nor mind. She had simply instincts—most of the bad instincts of the animal, none of the good. The great motive power which really directed her was—Self; her intense selfishness made her cruel. She was passionate and obstinate. She had no firmness, and only a weak intellect; as for her mind it was of the lowest school-girl average. All she cared for was herself; to gratify and indulge every whim and every fancy of her own, was what she lived for; if by such indulgence, such gratification, she found that she annoyed or

thwarted anybody, so much greater was her pleasure.

The beauty, both of face and form, with which nature had endowed this *first-born* child of Walter Morris and Cynthia Kenmuir, was great. It approached nearer to perfection than her father had foreseen, and he was very proud of her.

Neither her mind nor her disposition kept pace with her bodily beauty; but her father cared nothing about her mind, for he knew that his own was quite as evil as his daughter's.

In every bad point, in every objectionable trait of character, this woman resembled her father *in toto*.

Four hours later, when the "great house" was all in darkness and slumber, the man in the hut saddled his horse stealthily by the dim light of a lantern.

He put some hot sago and milk, which he had saved from his own supper, in a tin, covered it up and took it with him, for he hoped to find the poor tramp and to give him this food. So he mounted his horse and went in search of the man who had been denied shelter by his master. He rode on in the storm with his lantern, the thunder rolling in peal after peal, and flash after flash of lightning made all things livid.

It was very dreadful even for a strong man to be out in such a storm. The blinding glare and awful crash frightened his horse, so he dismounted and stood beside it. The rain beat upon him in great heavy splashes; the horse winced and trembled with every blue flash and roaring peal.

“God have mercy on that poor fellow;

where can he be?" said the man to himself.

A great broad flash of vivid lightning irradiated heaven and earth, and revealed the poor "tramp" where he lay, close by; but before he could be reached, before he could receive succour and assistance, the lightning had withdrawn its aid.

The man from the hut, leading his horse by its bridle, groped about, feeling amongst the tussocks for the "tramp." The lantern had of course been rendered useless in the early part of his search by the drenching rain. The morning stars peeping through the rent curtains of the abating storm saw him dragging his exhausted limbs slowly and by instinct, rather than by design, towards the township of Greenfell. He led his horse, on whose back was the body of the—dead tramp.

The humane shepherd who had gone in search of the poor fellow, found him dead. To a magistrate he gave a true account of what had taken place. He left the dead body at Greenfell, and returned to his master's house.

An inquest was held. Mr. Walter Morris was censured as being *morally* guilty of the man's death, though not legally so. The people of the place could not find words by which to express their abhorrence of this cruel wretch, their intense hatred of this man who refused to assist a fellow-creature.

After this sad and shameful event, many men objected to work for Walter Morris ; they would not live in his employment. At the township of Greenfell he was burnt in effigy.

The father and daughter set off again



in a large steamer, to travel. They could rest nowhere, for their evil deeds pursued them. Soon after setting out on the voyage, they discovered that their fellow-passengers knew who they were. These two people were shunned and avoided by all those on board the vessel. From the first port at which they landed, they took a passage in a return vessel, so were soon back again.

Most persons would think that Mr. Walter Morris would be tired of the kind of life he led, and that he would like to "turn over a new leaf," but such was not the case.

It is true, he started in life, in early manhood, charged with a great crime, a heinous offence, but for all that, the man's character was in his own hands, to mar or to make.

Men are of such stuff as fate is made of, not mere toys tossed by the wayward forces of some blind destiny. Dim passions rise from unknown depths and struggle in us. They are the legacy of past generations, and the great question with most men seems to be—"How shall we escape our ancestors and their sins?"

Fate hems us round like an atmosphere, but our safety is, that the same atmosphere exists within us. And as long as FREE WILL lies within our frail film of humanity, *frailness* can withstand all the mass and force that bear upon us from without.

Hence Walter Morris *could* have moulded and shaped his character for good had he so chosen, as well as for evil, which latter he evidently preferred. Our acts once done and passed from us are irre-

trievable ; they lie in wait for us at unexpected corners of our future life. But our character is always in the mould ; we do not start in life with a cast-iron label and carry it with us to the grave.

Our deeds may corrupt our character or make it noble ; we have the free-will to do them or to leave them undone. In these few last sentences we see how a man may, and can, shape and mould his own character. Those that have eyes to see let them see ; if any of my readers are unable to do so, pray let them close this book at once and pass on. Mr. Walter Morris was a man of great wealth. He was one of the few "successful" run-holders. Neither hard times nor bad seasons affected him ; but he bore a bad character ; neither servants nor any others

under his command respected him ; and since the “ burning in effigy ” business, he had lost his self-confidence and his self-assurance. He knew that if there had been a horse-pond on his estate, he most surely would have been dragged through it, and that by men in his own pay. He still affected authority, and endeavoured to have his commands carried out by severity of tone and discipline, so a number of the “ station hands ” left his employment. He then tried to enlist good feeling by unexpected leniency and forbearance ; nevertheless, he was despised by those whom he ruled, because they knew he had started a course of duplicity in order to bind them to his service. Whatever his workmen might have thought of him in years gone by, matters not ; it is certain they now held him in immeasurable contempt, for in

order to conciliate them, he at last gave up his own judgment; falsity had crept into it, so that he could not depend upon it himself. His orders became self-contradictory both in spirit and in form. Thus he might be compared to that Irish jury who returned the verdict of, "Guilty of manslaughter in the first degree, but we don't think he is the man."

Thus it came to pass, when he gave orders for several of his men to be on board his yacht at a certain hour, they did not make their appearance. "For," said they one to another, "he does not know what he wants or what he means. Most likely he will alter his plans; by the time we get to the water, he will swear he never told us to go on board the *Sea Spray*. Besides, there are the sheep for us to look after, and the fences to mend, which are of more

consequence than a yacht." So they did not obey his orders.

Mr. Walter Morris, with his daughter, sailed away without any other creature on board the *Sea Spray* but themselves. Whilst the weather continued calm, all went well; but, as soon as night set in, a gale of wind sprang up, and the frail yacht and its passengers were never seen again. The pretty little *Sea Spray* foundered that night!

Mr. Morris had, by a will bearing a recent date, left the whole of his property, real and personal, to his daughter. She being drowned, there was no heir to his vast estates. Barristers and solicitors gave a variety of opinions as to what ought to be done, and counsel's advice was taken; but it all ended in the absolute sale of the property, in order to defray the legal costs

and expenses. So it passed into other hands, and belonged to no descendant of the family of Kenmuir.

About this time a mighty wave of disease swept over the whole of a certain beautiful and luxuriant island in the Pacific Ocean, in a very remarkable and astounding manner, presenting quite a phenomenon, so swift was its progress, so extraordinary were its effects.

This wave of disease slew its thousands rapidly, and did not stay its course until thirty thousand of the natives were swept off by it; amongst this number were many great chiefs. In despite of the most careful explanations and the most emphatic warnings given by the white population of this particular island to the natives, they would not keep away from the infected places or from their diseased friends.

The infatuation for “visiting” amongst the natives was appalling.

The healthy shaking hands with the diseased, the former received a manifestation that they had done so—a souvenir which they took with them to their homes in various parts of the island, and which they bestowed on their own households and on their neighbours.

The principal preventive and cure of the terrible malady to which the natives had recourse, was the creation of a sudden and abominable uproar in a village, to drive away the demon disease which they believed came, hovering bat-like, and hung to a tree in the place, and could be driven away if made sufficiently uncomfortable by din and commotion.

At eight o'clock on a quiet evening two guns were fired, shouts were raised,



then the high yell, and right round the island the hubbub caught. Every one that could halloo, yell, and shout did so; every man who could get a drum to beat, beat it; those who had not drums to perform on tapered off on kerosene tins; while others blew conch-shells and made a dismal noise. Rapidly the sickness flew from village to village until communication almost ceased between the places, and the whole population of a district was laid low at once, till there were none to nurse the sick and none to fetch food but such as were sick themselves. The people of the land fell in all directions like banana plants blown down by the wind.

The churches were closed, for there were no people to go and listen to the sermons of the missionaries. The children had a long holiday from school. It seemed

a mysterious land, and every day was like a Sabbath. The missionaries now became sellers of medicines more than ever, though at all times they drove a "roaring" trade with patent medicines and physics.

Entering into a house, you would see the whole of its tenants stretched on their mats. It was a woful time, everybody sick and no doctors or nurses. A strange, sad silence reigned over the whole island.

The matsails of the canoes that used so merrily to stud the blue sea on a fine day, like butterflies come out in the sunshine, had disappeared from the outlook altogether. No natives were to be seen in any direction. There was a stop to bartering, to food selling, for the island was turned into a house of death! The silence of death reigned in it; the sight of death met the eye everywhere.

During the time this affliction raged, the people's Christianity was on the wane, and at length it gave way altogether; for, said they, "Neither the missionaries nor their God can help us;" so the old beliefs and the old superstitions again lifted their heads, like snakes scotched but not killed. So the natives paid their services, and adored their old gods, who, they said, "helped them quite as much as the new gods did."

A meeting was held amongst the few chiefs who had escaped the pestilential sickness. At this council it was decided that every white man should be killed. Each and all of the white men were to be offered up as one great sacrifice to the native gods, to appease and to pacify their anger, to propitiate these deities, so that the woful malady might be stayed.

Accordingly it was done. At a given signal the natives rushed upon the white men, brandishing clubs over their heads, dancing defiance in their faces, and dealing them their death blows.

Thus Major Campbell was massacred by the natives, in their general rising against the white people. Thus he was offered as a sacrifice of atonement and of propitiation to the native gods.

The alliance of Major Campbell and his wife resulted in an unhappy marriage. The love on his side wore out in a short time, and on hers it never existed. She was loyal to her husband, but loyalty is independent of the unworthiness of its object; and loyalty will never make up for the want of affection. The chief act of her life had been a mistake. Her crown was gone, but she had ample compensa-

tion for its loss, in the two strong links which bound her in the chain of their love. Her two children, growing fast into manhood and womanhood, are dearer to her than ever, they fill her life more completely day by day.

She had duly received her letters and her papers from abroad, and from places beyond the seas, in which she read the account of the wholesale massacre of the white men on a certain island in the Pacific Ocean. The same paper also told her of the final act to the Kenmuir and Morris tragedy, when the curtain of the world's stage dropped upon them for ever.

Late one evening she sat in her room, with the windows still wide-open, when a few stray grey moths came fluttering in, to do harm to themselves, to singe their own wings in the light which burned on

her table. The moths did not molest her, so she sat still. How different to that race against time which she remembered, in the Empire City of New Zealand, when, with slipper in hand, she went round and round her bedroom, with not exactly a prayer on her lips, to chase mosquitoes—not to their death, for mosquitoes won't be killed ; no, but when the winged musicians considered they had let her enjoy the fun long enough, they flew airily, chanting loud hosannas, on to the ceiling, where neither she nor her slipper could reach them. When she was in bed their fun began, for they tasted her ; and she had not yet forgotten the tortures of that night.

She closed her windows and retired to rest, listening to the voices of the crickets, which abound in the fields at

Strelley. The voice, though harsh and rough, was more welcome to her ears than the musical harmony of mosquitoes. The seasons followed each other in quick succession, and found her always happy. As she sat by a bright fire in her library one winter's evening, thinking of all the years that were past and gone, she rose from her seat to ring for lights, and said aloud, "Truly strange events happen in the short span of one woman's life!"





## CHAPTER XIII.

### MARRIAGE BELLS.



APTAIN GORDON had been "at home" for a long while. He had seen the old folks, and had been on the Continent with his sisters, in fact he had enjoyed himself right well. But, strange to say, he was longing to get back to Tasmania. He sold his commission in the army, thus he was free to go where he pleased. He told his mother that "dear old England had not such a climate to



boast of as Tasmania had, and that, having once lived under her sunny skies, he longed to be there again."

"But, my son," said she, "when and whom will you marry? Surely you will take a wife out with you, one from your own land."

He did not answer his mother for some little time, for he was thinking of *Ismène Hudson*. Directly the old lady spoke to him about "taking a wife," his thoughts flew to this girl. She was not such a beauty as her sister, whom Mr. Roby had called the "grand impulsive girl;" but about *Ismène* there was something indescribably attractive, her slightest actions and words interested and delighted you. There was a beauty about her unassuming simplicity which preserved its own influence over you in spite of all rival influences, be

they what they might. She possessed this ascendancy over men especially.

Captain Gordon accounted for it because she was so exquisitely natural, in heart, word, and manner, so different from the great majority of girls and women whom he had met in England since his return from the colony.

“Mother,” said he at length, “in the present day most women appear to be desirous of morally unsexing themselves before society. They imitate the language and the manners of men, they all talk slang, most of them smoke, many of them drink to excess, and I hear on all sides conversations about the ‘divided skirt!’ which is an outrage, and should not be countenanced. If women please to unsex themselves in dress, as well as in habits of life, and in silly exploits of possible, but

not of prudent intellectual and physical energy, they may be left to compass their own discomfiture, without more than an ordinary warning. But when women persistently obtrude these vagaries on public notice and attention, they become a positive nuisance. My good mother, this 'divided skirt' is neither more nor less than trousers! and I am certain must be productive of unwomanly ways, which are unnatural, and to be deprecated. Again, your women of 'to-day' repress all sign or betrayal of warmth of feeling. There is a fashionable imperturbability of features which reflects the fashionable imperturbability of mind. They are never amused, impressed, or agitated in a natural, womanly way. With these women love would be a mere 'business affair,' a matter of 'calculation.'

“Not one of the many women whom I have seen and met since my return home, would I take as a wife. No, dear mother, I must have a woman in whom I can place entire and perfect confidence, faith, and trust—a woman whose emotions are still warm and impressible, whose affections and sympathies can still appear in her actions. But such a woman will not easily be found, if at all, in modern society in England. However, I know where I can find such a woman, I know where she is living in a country house, the delight of all who know her.

“There is something about the woman of whom I am now speaking which inspires respect as well as love.”

“Let me ask you, mother,” he said, “who in the name of heaven can respect or love the ‘bastard-masculine’ women of the exclusively modern order?”

“I am quite of your opinion, my son. I agree with all you have said. But will this good, natural, most loveable woman whom you know, consent to become your wife? In other words, does she love you?” asked his mother.

“I have not asked her that question myself, so cannot inform you,” replied her son.

“I know you have only visited the great City of the Plains, in New Zealand, and Tasmania. Which of these places does she live in?” inquired his mother.

“Oh! pray don’t mention those two countries in the same day! Do you know, mother, that the Flattestbury Plains are remarkable for nothing but scrub and tussock, toi toi grass, and ‘Irishman,’\* boulders, shingle, and—ugly women! Certainly it is not there where my ideal of a

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\* “Irishman” is a native prickly shrub.

perfect woman lives. Thank God, she has never even been on the Flattestbury Plains or in the City; for those same plains can boast of many very immoral, bad people, although the place is a Church settlement," he said.

"Ah! then it is in Tasmania that 'your charmer dwells,' " replied his mother, laughing.

"Tasmania contains so many charming things. Its loveliness is not only perfect but wondrous to behold! Tasmania, for its size, contains more beauty of scenery and of landscape than any portion of the known world. Almost the whole surface is occupied by mountain ranges and fine valleys clothed with forests in which are trees of extraordinary grandeur. The views to be obtained in that country are unsurpassed for magnificence."

Captain Gordon now went out, as he did not intend to be questioned by his mother any more on this subject. But he did not banish Ismène from his thoughts. On the contrary, he delighted to think of her. He was quite sure that when he said "good-bye" to her, the bright eyes grew dimmer and became less animated. He noted the paleness of her face, the involuntary closing and trembling of her lips. The strength of her emotions was in their silence. When he left Hobart, he felt sure of that pure heart's love for him. He was certain of it, from many indications which no man could mistake.

And Ismène was quite as certain that he loved her, though the words had never yet been spoken; nevertheless, it was a fact of which *she* was sure. Though Ismène had neither the desire nor the in-

clination to shine, she had eclipsed all other women whom Captain Gordon had ever known. She conquered him by no other weapon than the purely feminine charm of everything she said and did. None of the highly accomplished and equally highly bred young English girls had any charm for him.

He was a man who studied every woman, with critical eyes. He thought Dame Nature had left all women, even the most lovely, imperfect and incomplete. There was a certain something missing, wanting, which love alone could develop, and even then, a woman was not, in his opinion, quite complete, for she needed maternity to make her really perfect. When looking at Ismène he had often thought how charming she would look, and how her blush would shine forth in the full luxury of its



beauty when she heard the first words of love, and received the first kiss from the man she loved! As a rule, he considered her a trifle too pale. However, he had seen no woman who had such attractions for him as Ismène had, and he determined to go to her, and to make his home with her in that sunny land of the southern hemisphere. He knew that it would be best for him to leave England at once, for there seemed to have grown within him suddenly a great yearning for that far-off country which he had never felt before, a sort of home sickness for the land in which Ismène dwelt. Never once did his thoughts wander away to any place on the Continent, where he had been with his sisters. He set about making preparations for his departure. When he and his family met at dinner, one of his sisters remarked, "So

you are going amongst the convicts again ;  
I wonder at you doing so."

"Yes ;" said his mother, "so am I surprised."

"Are you both so ignorant that you do not know that *no convicts* have been sent to Tasmania for the last thirty years ?" said Captain Gordon. "And you must remember that it is our own dear old England which breeds the convicts. The felons are bred and born on her soil, they are fed and nurtured in English homes, the convicts learn their crime and sin in England, and because they practise it in England, they are sent to other lands ; but that does not do away with the established fact that happy England is the home of the convict. Tasmania breeds no criminals, and many years ago she rose up and asserted her right to refuse to give a shelter and a harbour of

refuge to England's slime, and to the loathsome dregs of English population."

"La! how eloquent you have become," said one of his sisters.

"It needs much eloquence to correct your ignorance," said he.

In a few days Captain Gordon left England. After a prosperous voyage he reached the place of his destination at the season of the year when the golden wattle was in blossom. There was a slight land-breeze which wafted the fragrance over the estuary of the noble Derwent. Those who had been in that favoured island, knew it as the "golden scent;" but little children in Tasmania call it the "yellow smell," and snuff it up with delight.

Captain Gordon stood on the deck of the steamer and looked around him. The

seaward sky was lovely in its clearness, the foam of the leaping waters flashed gloriously in the sunlight, as wave after wave rolled past the vessel. There was no mist overhanging the proud mountain; there it stood with its crown on its head; there also were the hills and the valleys teeming with luxuriance—they seemed like inexhaustible fountains of perpetual verdure.

In this place he saw nature's beauty, and heard nature's voice speaking to him most tenderly, most lovingly; and he felt sure it was a happy omen for him. What an important part the weather plays in all our affairs, in all our relations in life. It was a perfect day when Captain Gordon reached Tasmania, and he was in the best possible spirits. He said to some fellow-passengers—

“In many respects the scenery of the

blue Derwent is superior to the far-famed harbour of Sydney, which is indeed beautiful; but no such back-ground as Mount Wellington towers behind Sydney. The approach to Tasmania is indeed a scene of grandeur." He put forth his hand, pointing to the mountain, as if to greet a friend, then with reverence he raised his hat in respect to the great mountain, which still wore its crown, for the summer was young yet. When he was on shore, he found his old friend Tom Hudson waiting for him. Early in the afternoon they drove to Sandy Bay, to Mr. Hudson's house, where he was going to stay for a time. Mrs. Hudson met him in the drawing-room. He had hoped to have seen Ismène also, but she was not there.

The gloominess of a melancholy woman is invariably though silently infectious.

For women have a natural way about them of imparting their emotions to others. Again, a happy woman imperceptibly sheds and diffuses her happiness around her. She has an influence that is very much akin to the power of a sunshiny day. Mrs. Hudson belonged to this last order. Her large and brilliant eyes sparkled with pleasure, as she met the man whom her husband brought to the house. Her cheerful conversation and her pleasant laugh made Captain Gordon feel that he really was with friends.

When dinner was announced, she merrily suggested that they should "march in single file" to the table, as there were only the two gentlemen and herself. "For," said she, "Ismène is away; she is paying a visit to Mrs. Chantrey at New Town, and will not be back for the present."

So the three "filed" into the dining-room. There was so much to talk about during dinner that the meal lasted a very long while ; but social, happy dinners come to an end like everything else.

When they were again in the drawing-room, and Tom Hudson was in his arm-chair by the fireside, his wife said to him—

"Now, you really must decide about baby's name. I have asked you so often to tell me which of those two names you prefer. I will not be put off any longer. Besides, you know she is six weeks old, and must be christened."

"What are the names?" inquired Captain Gordon.

"You see," said Mr. Hudson, "our baby came into the world when the great comet came last month ; also, at that time there was some angel to be honoured in

the church, so my wife does not know to which she should give the preference, the comet or the angel. She has very cleverly manufactured a name after the star with the tail—Comēta—by which she proposes to call the child, but she does not wish to slight the angelic being, so she also thought of Gabrielle as a name. Now, I must admit frankly that I do not value baptism. I know it is a very old and ancient rite, and like many other old customs, it should be done away with ; pouring the cold water on the child only makes the poor little creature cry.”

“ Why do you wander from the subject like this? I was not asking you about baptism, but about the two names ! ” said his wife.

“ Well, you know the comet and the angel are two heavenly bodies, so choose



for yourself. I am not rash enough to risk offending one heavenly body by slighting it, even though I should ingratiate myself with another by giving it the preference. But suppose we leave the stars and the angels to themselves, and call the child Estelle, after the sister who tended and nursed me into life I may say; for certainly the grave would have claimed me as its own long ago, had it not been for her love and untiring care," said Mr. Hudson.

"Of course, we will call her after the absent one. Why, I owe my happiness to her. You would have died, had it not been for *that* sister's care," said his wife, who seemed glad to have the momentous question settled, and said, "Ismène will stand proxy for Mrs. Campbell."

"And the pair of you will risk offending both those heavenly bodies of which

we have been talking," said Captain Gordon, as he laughed at the idea of calling a child either after a comet or after an angel.

Next morning he drove into the city with Mr. Hudson, and from there he walked to New Town. It was a long way, but he felt little impatience, and no sense of fatigue, for he knew that soon after mid-day he should see *Ismène*. Until then, the present had no existence for him; even now he was living in the future. He passed through the streets of the city on to the country roads, wanting no company but his own thoughts, wishing for no sounds but the love-music of his own soul. At present his world was limited to Mrs. Chantrey's house; the population of the whole globe was merged in one—that one was *Ismène*.

He reached the gate which led into the

carriage drive. His thoughts had been so occupied that at first sight of it he seemed surprised. He had been dreaming that first dream, had beheld that all-absorbing vision of all young men, the dream of living rapturously with the woman whom they love, in a hidden and private retirement, kept inviolable from friends and strangers alike.

Captain Gordon was either not aware of, or else he had forgotten that, let a newly-married couple go where they will, they cannot keep their secret to themselves. The head-waiter at the hotel, the porter who takes up the luggage, the boys who answer the bells and who go errands, all these strangers, who have never set eyes on the couple before, are morally sure they are bride and bridegroom. They manage to imply this certainty to each other by

many sly glances and winks. The secret "will out," and the moment the landlady or the chambermaid has seen one or other of the couple, the question is settled instantly, and beyond a doubt. So after all, this hiding and living in secrecy is quite futile.

Well, at last, Captain Gordon was on the verandah, and at the entrance door; he rang the bell, was admitted, and shown into the drawing-room. He was glad to sit down for one moment only, for the door was opened, and Ismène entered the room. He rose from his seat to meet her half-way across the large room.

"So you have come back to Tasmania? After seeing and visiting so many European countries, you have found none better than this," said she.

"What you say regarding the country

is quite true ; but I have not come so much to it as *to* you and *for* you," he said, and noticed the deep blush his words had caused to spread over her face. The blush, the faltering hand, and tremulous voice of Ismène were outward and visible signs, showing the inward workings of her heart, which gave him the greatest satisfaction. "What a charming contrast this girl is," he thought, "to those impressionless beings whom I met in England, who affect to ridicule all outward developments of feeling."

Directly she sat down he, of course, seated himself by her side, and poured forth his long pent up love. The language of love is a language of repetition ; nevertheless, he continued to give utterance to his feelings. He wished the English language was richer in superlatives, and that it had a larger and more varied assortment of

choice expressions ready-made for the use of lovers ! He feared his lady-love might become tired of the "language of repetition." But it was not so, for she listened with pleasure till he sealed his words with a warm kiss ; then he looked at *Ismène*, and thought how lovely she was, covered with blushes, and with unshed tears of happiness under her eyelids like the dew-drops on the petals of flowers.

Presently Mrs. Chantrey came into the room ; she held out her hand to her guest, saying, " You have played the truant a long time, but I am glad to see you back. I purposely stayed away to arrange some flowers, for my feminine instincts, my womanly feelings told me you would like to be alone with *Ismène*, and I see that my conjectures, my surmises, were correct. You will stay and take lunch with us."

Then she told him that she had made up her mind to have the wedding at her house; that he must tell Mr. and Mrs. Hudson of her plan to have the ceremony at New Town Church. She pushed aside the lace curtains from one of the open windows, and said, "Come here both of you, and look at the church over there, on the rising ground, with the magnificent 'bush' as a background. Nothing in the world can be more lovely than that view, and there is the noble Derwent laving its banks close by. Look, there is the church where you will be married."

As she uttered the last words, all the birds in her aviary and the myriads of countless songsters in the garden burst forth into one prolonged and joyful song; the happy music came from every branch, and from every tree.

“At all events, the feathered tribe approve of my plans; now, let us go into the dining-room, for much is waiting,” said Mrs. Chantrey.

“I take the song of the birds as a happy omen. I am sure they were chanting a *Te Deum* for us,” said Captain Gordon.

After lunch he and Ismène walked about the gardens and grounds, then strolled away to the blue Derwent. There they sauntered and chatted till the sun was setting, and flashes of rose-light were dashing and leaping on the streaming river. The birds were winging their way on swift pinions towards their nests in the trees of the neighbouring “bush.” The lovers retraced their steps, Captain Gordon left Ismène at the garden gate, and proceeded on his way citywards. The ghostly stillness of night was sailing solemnly over



earth and sky long before he reached Hobart. Of course, he was too late for the Sand Bay coach ; he had missed it, thus was compelled to stay at one of the hotels for the night.

The following morning being Sunday, he did not rise as early as usual, but lay listening to the various bells of the different churches, as they all clanged out loudly and clamorously, as if they were trying which should attract the most notice and the largest share of attention, by their noise, rather than by their sweetness. At last he got up, he ordered a parcel of sandwiches to be ready for him, and in a few minutes set out for a walk to one of those lovely fern-tree valleys. He went to the "Silver Falls," a most exquisite cascade ; he heard the waterfall before he saw it, the cascade burst upon his view soon. This lovely

waterfall was a stream of liquid silver framed in solid rocks which looked as black as jet! From the grandly sublime to the softly exquisite, it changed as it went dancing along. He looked down the ravine; the stream that trickled over the rocks, and upon the stones, sparkled like a rivulet of silver-fire. Then he gazed up at the "Silver Falls," and said, "Truly you are appropriately named." These falls are like a sheet of living silver, so brilliant and so clear!

A few fleecy, soft white clouds were in the blue sky, with their bright wavy edges rolling majestically above him. The birds lifted up their voices in song, clear and sweet; the insects were buzzing happily amongst the native flowers, and he sat thinking of his "love" as he ate his lunch in solitude. He again set out to walk to Mr. Hudson's house; every step of the

way was a joy to him. By the time he reached his friend's dwelling, the sun stood fiery and low in a cloudless horizon, the fair summer evening was drawing to a close. Twilight, the last and most quiet hour of daylight loveliness, was fading on the violet sky as he entered the hospitable mansion. He and Mr. Hudson sat on the verandah, smoking and drinking coffee, till it was quite dark. Captain Gordon told his friend the purport of his visit to Mrs. Chantrey's, and asked him to act as father to his bride, and "give her to him as his wife," saying, "I have waited for Ismène. The delay has been a trial to my patience, though none to my constancy; and the delay has made my affection for her stronger than ever. The delay, irksome as I found it, was unavoidable."

Tom Hudson took it all very quietly

and calmly, and agreed to the request, saying, "I guessed what you were about when you did not return last evening."

They both sat for a time listening to the endless cries of sea birds, and to the ceaseless dirging murmur of the surf, with the far-off music of that grand performer, the Wind, as he played amongst the ocean caverns, when Mrs. Hudson tapped at the window, and asked them to join her indoors.

Mrs. Chantrey arranged everything for the wedding. One morning she said to Ismène, "We have nothing to do with the fashions of the Cold North, here in the Sunny South. I want you to wear the palest pink, the shade called 'maiden's blush,' with a tulle veil of the same tint, for your wedding, and a wreath of native pink heath! Now, don't make any objections, for I know it will suit you, and I

mean to dress you with my own hands for the occasion. I shall take as much pleasure in decking you as a bride as I used to take in dressing my dolls when I was a child."

Mrs. Chantrey had her own way. She carried her point and displayed great taste. Arrayed as a bride, Ismène looked lovely. In one month from the day of his arrival, Captain Gordon went to New Town Church, with Dr. Burnside as groom's man. The bells rang out a merry bridal peal. All the children of both orphan schools had a holiday. They scattered flowers in the path leading from the church, and wished long life and happiness to Captain and Mrs. Gordon.

Every leaf and every branch of the glorious "bush" were waving in the soft, mild air, and the earth was full of joy.

THE END.









